

Official Report of the
One Hundred Sixty-second
Annual General

CONFERENCE

of The Church of Jesus Christ
of Latter-day Saints

held in the Tabernacle
Salt Lake City, Utah

April 4 and 5, 1992

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Published by
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints
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THE ONE HUNDRED SIXTY-SECOND ANNUAL GENERAL CONFERENCE OF THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

The 162nd Annual General Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints convened in the Tabernacle on Temple Square in Salt Lake City, Utah, on Saturday, April 4, 1992, at 10:00 A.M.

The general sessions of the conference were held at 10:00 A.M. and 2:00 P.M. on Saturday and Sunday, April 4 and 5, 1992. The general priesthood session was held on Saturday, April 4, 1992, at 6:00 P.M.

President Ezra Taft Benson presided at the Saturday morning and Sunday morning sessions. President Thomas S. Monson, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted the Saturday morning, general priesthood, and Sunday afternoon sessions. President Gordon B. Hinckley, First Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted the Saturday afternoon and Sunday morning sessions.

Television and radio stations carried portions or all of the conference sessions to large audiences throughout the world. In addition, the general sessions and priesthood session were carried via satellite transmission to more than one thousand stake centers. The general priesthood session was also carried by closed-circuit transmission to approximately nine hundred locations in many countries. For the first time, the Sunday morning session was carried by satellite transmission to locations in Huddersfield, England; Versailles, France; and Frankfurt, Germany.

General Authorities present

The following General Authorities of the Church attended one or more of the general sessions:

The First Presidency: Ezra Taft Benson, Gordon B. Hinckley, and Thomas S. Monson

The Council of the Twelve: Howard W. Hunter, Boyd K. Packer, Marvin J. Ashton, L. Tom Perry, David B. Haight, James E. Faust, Neal A. Maxwell, Russell M. Nelson, Dallin H. Oaks, M. Russell Ballard, Joseph B. Wirthlin, and Richard G. Scott

The Presidency of the Seventy: Dean L. Larsen, Marion D. Hanks, Robert L. Backman, James M. Paramore, J. Richard Clarke, Rex D. Pinegar, and Carlos E. Asay

The First Quorum of the Seventy: Angel Abrea, William R. Bradford, Ted E. Brewerton, Monte J. Brough, F. Enzo Busche, John K. Carmack, Joe J. Christensen,¹ Jacob de Jager, Charles Didier, Loren C. Dunn, Vaughn J. Featherstone, Jack H. Goaslind, John H. Groberg, W. Eugene Hansen, Harold G. Hillam, Jeffrey R. Holland, F. Burton Howard, Marlin K. Jensen, L. Lionel Kendrick, Yoshihiko Kikuchi, Adney Y. Komatsu, Alexander B. Morrison, H. Burke Peterson, Hugh W. Pinnock, Ronald E. Poelman, L. Aldin Porter, Hartman Rector, Jr., Hans B. Ringger, Earl C. Tingey, and Robert E. Wells

The Second Quorum of the Seventy: Carlos H. Amado, Eduardo Ayala, Benjamin B. Banks, Albert Choules, Jr., Spencer J. Condie, Rulon G. Craven, LeGrand R. Curtis, Clinton L. Cutler, Julio E. Dávila, Robert K. Dellenbach, Graham W. Doxey, Lloyd P. George, F. Melvin Hammond, Han In Sang, George R. Hill III, Malcolm S. Jeppsen, Kenneth Johnson, Cree-L. Kofford, John R. Lasater, W. Mack Lawrence,

¹Elder Gene R. Cook was excused because of recent knee surgery.

Richard P. Lindsay, Merlin R. Lybbert, Douglas J. Martin, Helvécio Martins, Gerald E. Melchin, Lynn A. Mickelsen, Joseph C. Muren, Stephen D. Nadauld, Dennis B. Neuenschwander, Jorge A. Rojas, Glen L. Rudd, Robert E. Sackley, Sam K. Shimabukuro, Douglas H. Smith, Lynn A. Sorensen, Horacio A. Tenorio, J. Ballard Washburn, and Durrel A. Woolsey

The Presiding Bishopric: Robert D. Hales, Henry B. Eyring, and Glenn L. Pace

Other authorities present

Other Church authorities in attendance included many general, stake, and ward officers.

SATURDAY MORNING SESSION

The first general session of the 162nd Annual General Conference convened in the Tabernacle on Temple Square in Salt Lake City, Utah, on Saturday, April 4, 1992, at 10:00 A.M. President Ezra Taft Benson presided, and President Thomas S. Monson, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted this session.

The music for the opening session was provided by the Mormon Youth Chorus, with Robert C. Bowden conducting and Bonnie Goodliffe and Linda Margetts at the organ.

To begin the meeting, the Mormon Youth Chorus sang "The Morning Breaks" without announcement. President Monson then made the following remarks:

President Thomas S. Monson

We welcome you this morning from the Tabernacle on Temple Square in Salt Lake City in this, the first general session of the 162nd annual conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. President Ezra Taft Benson, who presides at this conference, has asked that I conduct this session.

We welcome all who are participating in the large audience assembled in the Tabernacle and the overflow gathering in the nearby Assembly Hall,

where Elders Joseph B. Wirthlin, Dean L. Larsen, and Lynn A. Sorensen are seated on the stand.

We welcome also the many others who are receiving these conference proceedings by satellite transmission, radio, cable, and television.

We acknowledge the General Authorities of the Church, all of whom are in attendance except Elder Gene R. Cook, who is excused because of recent knee surgery. We acknowledge the Relief Society, Young Women, and Primary general presidencies, who are seated on the stand.

We also extend a special welcome to government, education, and civic leaders who are present with us.

The Mormon Youth Chorus, under the direction of Brother Robert C. Bowden, with Sisters Bonnie Goodliffe and Linda Margetts at the organ, is providing the music for this session. The chorus opened this session by singing "The Morning Breaks, the Shadows Flee" and will now favor us with "Rock of Ages."

Following the singing, the invocation will be offered by Elder Loren C. Dunn of the Seventy.

The chorus sang "Rock of Ages."

Elder Loren C. Dunn offered the invocation.

President Thomas S. Monson

How our beloved prophet and President, Ezra Taft Benson, would enjoy standing at this pulpit to open a glorious conference of the Church. President Benson, we love you; we pray for you; we are anxious to follow your inspired direction.

This morning I pray for heavenly help as I respond to President Benson's assignment to speak in his behalf. I shall attempt to express his thoughts and counsel, largely in his own words.

Tribute to women

This year we commemorate the 150th anniversary of the founding of the Relief Society. Women of the Church rejoice as they reflect on past achievements of their organization and, with foresight coupled with faith, meet today's challenges and plan for future accomplishments.

President Benson has singled out two members of the Relief Society for his personal tribute. He said: "I pay grateful tribute to two elect women who have influenced my life—my mother, and my own sweetheart and eternal companion. I thank God that they have used their womanly attributes of compassion and charity to bless my life and the lives of all their posterity."¹

Reminiscing of boyhood days, President Benson recalls:

"Mother was Relief Society president in the ward, a small but solid country ward. I remember how important Father considered her work in that assignment.

"Father gave to me, as the oldest [child], the responsibility of harnessing the horse and getting the buggy ready for Mother's . . . weekly Relief Society meetings. . . .

"At that time I was not tall enough to buckle the collar or put the bridle on the horse without getting on the fence or [standing on] a box.

"In addition, I was to take half a bushel of wheat from our granary and put it in the back of the buggy. In those days the Relief Society sisters were building up a storage of wheat against a time of need. . . .

"When Mother was called to visit the sick in the ward or to help mothers with new babies, it was always by horse and buggy. As the buggy rolled down the dirt road, the circling wheels left a track that stayed even after the buggy disappeared. Mother's influence has also stayed—in my life and in the countless lives she blessed through compassionate service and example."²

I find it interesting that Ezra Benson, the boy who helped his mother and the Relief Society gather and store wheat for a future day of hunger, was Ezra Benson the Apostle, who years later directed a massive distribution of wheat and other essentials to the famished of Europe following World War II.

Of his companion, Flora, President Benson has said: "I honor and acknowledge my precious wife. . . . Her loving devotion, inspiration, faith and loyal support have contributed to whatever success may be ours."³

Suggestions for guiding children

Thinking of the example of his own mother and that of his beloved and faithful wife, Flora, President Benson has offered ten specific suggestions for mothers as they guide their precious children:

1. Take time to always be at the crossroads in the lives of your children, whether they be six or sixteen.

2. Take time to be a real friend to your children.

3. Take time to read to your children. Remember what the poet wrote:

You may have tangible wealth untold;

Caskets of jewels and coffers of gold.
Richer than I you can never be—
I had a mother who read to me.⁴

4. Take time to pray with your children.

5. Take time to have a meaningful weekly home evening. Make this one of your great family traditions.

6. Take time to be together at mealtimes as often as possible.

7. Take time daily to read the scriptures together as a family.

8. Take time to do things together as a family.

9. Take time to teach your children.

10. Take time to truly love your children. A mother's unqualified love approaches Christlike love.⁵

Though President Benson has addressed these suggestions primarily to mothers, I am confident he would expect those of us who are men and fathers bearing the holy priesthood to do our part, along with each son and daughter, to implement them and bring to fruition their divine objectives.

Each chair is filled

President Benson leaves us this counsel:

Brothers and sisters, "make it a family objective to all be together in the celestial kingdom. Strive to make your home a little bit of heaven on earth so that after this life is over, you may be able to say:

We are all here!

Father, mother, sister, brother,

All who hold each other dear.

Each chair is filled—

We're all at home. . . .

We're all—all here.⁶

God bless you, President Benson, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

NOTES

1. Ezra Taft Benson, "To the Elect Women of God," in *Woman* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1979), p. 74.
2. "To the Elect Women," pp. 74–75.
3. "To the Elect Women," p. 75.
4. Strickland Gillilan, "The Reading Mother."
5. Ezra Taft Benson, *To the Mothers in Zion* (pamphlet, 1987), pp. 8–12; see also Ezra Taft Benson, *Come, Listen to a Prophet's Voice* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1990), pp. 32–36.
6. "The Honored Place of Woman," *Ensign*, Nov. 1981, p. 107; poem quoted from *The Writings of Charles Sprague* (New York: Charles S. Francis, 1841), p. 73.

Elder James E. Faust of the Council of the Twelve Apostles will now speak to us.

Elder James E. Faust

Healing spiritual sickness

I humbly come to this pulpit today to speak about a sure cure for heartache, disappointment, torment, anguish, and despair. The psalmist stated, "He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds" (Psalm 147:3). The healing is a divine miracle; the wounds are a common lot of all mankind. Shakespeare has said, "He

jests at scars that never felt a wound" (*Romeo and Juliet*, act 2, scene 2, line 1). It seems that no one escapes the troubles, challenges, and disappointments of this world.

In today's overloaded society, some of the healing agents that our parents enjoyed seem not to be at work in our lives. Fewer and fewer are able to relieve stress by working with their hands and by tilling the soil. The in-

creasing demands, the diversity of voices, the entreating sales pitches, the piercing noises, the entanglement of many personal relationships can rob our souls of the peace they need to function and survive. Our hurry to meet the relentless demands of the clock tears away at our inner peace. The pressures to compete and survive are great. Our appetite for personal possessions seems enormous. The increasing forces that destroy the individual and family bring great sadness and heartbreak.

One reason for the spiritual sickness of our society is that so many do not know or care about what is morally right and wrong. So many things are justified on the basis of expediency and the acquiring of money and goods. In recent times, those individuals and institutions that have had the courage to stand up and speak out against adultery, dishonesty, violence, gambling, and other forms of evil are often held up to ridicule. Many things are just plain and simply wrong, whether they are illegal or not. Those who persist in following after the evil things of the world cannot know the "peace of God, which passeth all understanding" (Philippians 4:7).

Someway, somehow, we must find the healing influence that brings solace to the soul. Where is this balm? Where is the compensating relief so desperately needed to help us survive in the world's pressures? The onsetting comfort in large measure can come through increased communion with the Spirit of God. This can bring spiritual healing.

Warren Johnson's healing

Spiritual healing is illustrated in the story of Warren M. Johnson, pioneer ferryman at Lee's Ferry, Arizona. As a young man, Warren Johnson came west seeking his fortune in gold

in the summer of 1866. He became very ill, and his companions left him under a tree in the yard of a family in Bountiful. One of the daughters found him and reported that there was a dead man out in the yard. Although he was a complete stranger, this kind family took him in and nursed him back to health. They taught him the gospel, and he was baptized. He eventually ended up as the ferryman at Lee's Ferry.

In 1891 the Warren Johnson family suffered a great tragedy. Within a period of a short time, they lost four children to diphtheria. All four were buried in a row next to each other. In a letter to President Wilford Woodruff, dated July 29, 1891, Warren told the story:

"Dear Brother . . .

"In May 1891 a family residing in Tuba City, came here from Richfield Utah, where they . . . spent the winter visiting friends. At Panguitch they buried a child, . . . without disinfecting the wagon or themselves, [and] not even stopping to wash the dead child's clothes, they came to our house, and remained overnight, mingling with my little children. . . .

"We knew nothing of the nature of the disease, but had faith in God, as we were here on a very hard mission, and had tried as hard as we knew how to obey the word of Wisdom, [to] attend to the other duties of our religion, such as paying [our] tithing, family prayers, etc. etc., that our children would be spared. But alas, in four and a half days [the oldest boy] choked to death in my arms. Two more were taken down with the disease and we fasted and prayed as much as we thought it wisdom as we had many duties to perform here. We fasted [for] twenty-four hours and once I fasted [for] forty hours, but [to] no avail for both my little girls died also. About a week after their death my fifteen year old daughter Melinda was [also] stricken down and we did all we

could for her but she [soon] followed the others. . . . Three of my dear girls and one boy [have] been taken from us, and the end is not yet. My oldest girl nineteen years old is now prostrate [from] the disease, and we are fasting and praying in her behalf today. . . . I would ask for your faith and prayers in our behalf however. What have we done that the Lord has left us, and what can we do to gain his favor again[?]

"Yours in the gospel

"Warren M. Johnson" (in P. T. Riely, "Warren Marshall Johnson, Forgotten Saint," *Utah Historical Quarterly*, Winter 1971, p. 19; spelling modernized).

In a subsequent letter dated August 16, 1891, to his friend Warren Foote, Brother Johnson testified that he had found a spiritual peace:

"I can assure you, however, that it is the hardest trial of my life, but I set out for salvation and am determined that . . . through the help of Heavenly Father that I [would] hold fast to the iron rod no matter what troubles [came] upon me. I have not slackened in the performance of my duties, and hope and trust that I shall have the faith and prayers of my brethren, that I can live so as to receive the blessings you having authority . . . placed on my head" ("Autobiography of Warren Foote of Glendale, Kane County, Utah," vol. 2, 16 Aug. 1891; in LDS Church archives).

The gift of healing

The sixth article of faith states that, among other spiritual gifts, we believe in the gift of healing. To me, this gift extends to the healing of both the body and the spirit. The Spirit speaks peace to the soul. This spiritual solace comes by invoking spiritual gifts, which are claimed and manifested in many ways. They are rich, and full, and abundant in the Church today. They flow

from the proper and humble use of a testimony. They also come through the administering to the sick following an anointing with consecrated oil. Christ is the great Physician, who rose from the dead "with healing in his wings" (2 Nephi 25:13), while the Comforter is the agency of healing.

Healing through temple work

The Lord has provided many avenues by which we may receive this healing influence. I am grateful that the Lord has restored temple work to the earth. It is an important part of the work of salvation for both the living and the dead. Our temples provide a sanctuary where we may go to lay aside many of the anxieties of the world. Our temples are places of peace and tranquility. In these hallowed sanctuaries God "healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds" (Psalm 147:3).

Healing through scripture study

The reading and the study of the scriptures can bring great comfort. Elder Marion G. Romney stated:

"I feel certain that if, in our homes, parents will read from the Book of Mormon prayerfully and regularly, both by themselves and with their children, the spirit of that great book will come to permeate our homes and all who dwell therein. The spirit of reverence will increase, mutual respect and consideration for each other will grow. The spirit of contention will depart. Parents will counsel their children in greater love and wisdom. Children will be more responsive and submissive to that counsel. Righteousness will increase. Faith, hope, and charity—the pure love of Christ—will abound in our homes and lives, bringing in their wake peace, joy, and happiness" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1960, pp. 112–13).

Healing through the Word of Wisdom

When I was young, the health benefits of the Word of Wisdom, including abstinence from tobacco, alcoholic drinks, tea, and coffee, were not as well established as they are today. However, the spiritual benefits have long been validated. The Word of Wisdom promises that those who remember to keep this counsel and walk in obedience to the commandments “shall receive health in their navel and marrow to their bones” (D&C 89:18).

Marrow has long been a symbol of vibrant, healthful living. But in a day of life-saving bone marrow transplants, the phrase “marrow to their bones” takes on an additional significance as a spiritual covenant. The promises for those who keep the Word of Wisdom continue. Those who observe this law “shall find wisdom and great treasures of knowledge, even hidden treasures; and shall run and not be weary, and shall walk and not faint. And I, the Lord, give unto them a promise, that the destroying angel shall pass by them, as the children of Israel, and not slay them” (D&C 89:19–21).

Healing through sacrament meetings

If we are to be spared, we do indeed need to be fortified against the many destroying agents at work in the world today.

However, for many of us, the spiritual healing takes place not in great arenas of the world but in our own sacrament meetings. It is comforting to worship with, partake of the sacrament with, and be taught in a spirit of humility by neighbors and close friends who love the Lord and try to keep his commandments. Our good bishop assigns the participants to treat a gospel subject or principle. Invariably they speak by the power of the Holy Ghost, open-

ing their hearts so that the audience can behold the jewels therein. The messages are given in humble witness and sweet counsel. We of the audience understand that which is taught by the Spirit of truth and verify the accompanying testimonies.

Our sacrament meetings should be worshipful and healing, restoring those who attend to spiritual soundness. Part of this healing process occurs as we worship through music and song. Singing our beautiful, worshipful hymns is food for our souls. We become of one heart and one mind when we sing praises to the Lord. Among other influences, worshiping in song has the effect of spiritually unifying the participants in an attitude of reverence.

Healing through testimonies

Spiritual healing also comes from bearing and hearing humble testimonies. A witness given in a spirit of contrition, thankfulness for divine providence, and submission to divine guidance is a powerful remedy to relieve the anguish and concerns of our hearts.

Healing through sustaining leaders

I doubt that sincere members of this Church can achieve complete spiritual healing without being in harmony with the foundation of the Church, which, the Apostle Paul stated, is “the apostles and prophets” (Ephesians 2:20). This may not be the popular thing to do based upon the long history of rejection by the world of the prophets and their messages. Nevertheless, they are the oracles of God on earth and those called to lead and direct the work in this day and time. It is also essential for us to be found sustaining our bishops and our stake presidents and other leaders.

Healing through forgetting of self

Recent information seems to confirm that the ultimate spiritual healing comes in the forgetting of self. A review of the accounts indicates that those who survived best in prison and hostage camps were those who were concerned for their fellow prisoners and were willing to give away their own food and substance to help sustain the others. Dr. Viktor Frankl stated:

"We who lived in concentration camps can remember the men who walked through the huts comforting others, giving away their last piece of bread. They may have been few in number, but they offer sufficient proof that everything can be taken from a man but one thing: the last of . . . human freedoms—to choose one's attitude in any given set of circumstances, [and] to choose one's own way [of life]" (*Man's Search for Meaning* [New York: Simon and Schuster, 1963], p. 104).

The Savior of the world said it very simply: "And whosoever shall lose his life shall preserve it" (Luke 17:33).

Healing through prayer

Of all that we might do to find solace, prayer is perhaps the most comforting. We are instructed to pray to the Father in the name of his Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, by the power of the Holy Ghost. The very act of praying to God is satisfying to the soul, even though God, in his wisdom, may not give what we ask for. President Harold B. Lee taught us that all of our prayers are answered, but sometimes the Lord says no. The Prophet Joseph Smith taught that the "best way to obtain truth and wisdom" is "to go to God in prayer" (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, sel. Joseph Fielding Smith [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1938], p. 191). Prayer is most helpful in the healing process.

Wounds inflicted by others are healed by the "art of healing." President Joseph F. Smith stated, "But the healing of a wound is an art not acquired by practice alone, but by the loving tenderness that comes from universal good will and a sympathetic interest in the welfare and happiness of others" (*Gospel Doctrine*, 5th ed. [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1939], p. 264).

Healing through repentance

There is hope for all to be healed through repentance and obedience. The Prophet Isaiah verified that "though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow" (Isaiah 1:18). The Prophet Joseph Smith stated: "There is never a time when the spirit is too old to approach God. All are [in] reach of pardoning mercy" (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, p. 191).

After our full repentance, the formula is wonderfully simple. Indeed, the Lord has given it to us in these words: "Will ye not now return unto me, and repent of your sins, and be converted, that I may heal you?" (3 Nephi 9:13). In so doing, we have his promise that "he healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds" (Psalm 147:3).

Healing through turning to Christ

We find solace in Christ through the agency of the Comforter, and Christ extends this invitation to us: "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28). The Apostle Peter speaks of "casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you" (1 Peter 5:7). As we do this, healing takes place, just as the Lord promised through the prophet Jeremiah when he said:

"I will turn their mourning into joy, and will comfort them, and make

them rejoice from their sorrow. . . . I have satiated the weary soul, and I have replenished every sorrowful soul" (Jeremiah 31:13, 25).

In the celestial glory, we are told, "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain" (Revelation 21:4). Then faith and hope will replace heartache, disappointment, torment, anguish, and despair, and the Lord will give us strength, as Alma says, that we "should suffer no manner of afflictions, save it were swallowed up in the joy of Christ" (Alma 31:38). Of this I have a testimony, and I so declare it in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

Elder Marion D. Hanks

"Come unto me"

In the fourth chapter of the book of Alma is a line I cherish and would be worthy of: "The Spirit of the Lord did not fail him" (Alma 4:15).

Just a few yards from this beautiful Tabernacle, where since the 1860s the Saints have gathered for conference, is a visitors' center. In that visitors' center is visible through a wide, beautiful two-story window a Thorvaldsen *Christus*, carved after the pattern, a replica, of the original, which is in Copenhagen, Denmark, and is well known throughout the world as a classic representation of the Lord Jesus Christ. At the base of that statue are the words in Danish: *Kommer Til Mig, "Come unto Me."*

That invitation is the central mission of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. We desire to accept and to help others to accept the scriptural invitation to "come unto Christ, who is the Holy One of Israel, and partake of his salvation, and the power of

The chorus sang "My Heavenly Father Loves Me" without announcement.

President Monson

Elder James E. Faust of the Council of the Twelve Apostles has just spoken to us, followed by the Mormon Youth Chorus singing "My Heavenly Father Loves Me."

Elder Marion D. Hanks of the Presidency of the Seventy will now address us, and he will be followed by Elder Yoshihiko Kikuchi of the Seventy.

his redemption" (Omni 1:26). We know that he is "the way, the truth, and the life: [and that] no [one] cometh unto the Father, but by [him]" (John 14:6).

My testimony is that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, the Only Begotten in the flesh, the Good Shepherd, our Exemplar; that he is our Advocate with the Father, our Redeemer, and our Savior.

The Savior's example of service

With John of old, we testify that "the Father sent the Son to be the Savior of the world" (1 John 4:14).

We rejoice in the wonderful welding in his life of principle and performance. The Savior taught precepts of spiritual perfection, and he *practiced* and *applied* them with perfection. He could with authority declare that he was the light and example the people should follow: "I have set an example for you. . . . I am the light which ye shall hold up—that which ye have seen me do" (3 Nephi 18:16, 24).

What he *did*, as we read in a splendid verse in the book of Matthew, was to go "about all Galilee, teaching . . . and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of . . . disease" (Matthew 4:23). Matthew also recorded that, as he approached the final events of his earthly ministry, Jesus taught his followers the parable of the sheep and the goats, representing the judgment to come, in which he clearly identified those who will inherit "life eternal" and those who will "go away into everlasting punishment" (Matthew 25:46). The key difference was that those who should inherit the kingdom with him had developed the habit of helping, had experienced the joy of giving and the satisfaction of serving. They had responded to the needs of the hungry, thirsty, homeless, the naked, the sick, and those in prison. Well known are his words, the words of comfort to them: "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me" (Matthew 25:40), while to those who were condemned to "everlasting punishment" he made the sad pronouncement, "Inasmuch as ye did it *not* to one of the least of these, ye did it *not* to me" (Matthew 25:45; italics added).

Nothing would seem more clear than the high premium the Savior put upon selfless service to others as an indispensable element of Christian conduct and of salvation. Helping, giving, and sacrificing are, or should be, as natural as growing and breathing.

The Savior's two great missions

Only recently I came upon a significant statement made by President Clark at this pulpit fifty-five years ago concerning these matters:

"When the Savior came upon the earth he had two great missions; one was to work out the Messiahship, the

atonement for the fall, and the fulfillment of the law; the other was the work which he did among his brethren and sisters in the flesh by way of relieving their sufferings. . . . He left as a heritage to those who should come after him in his Church the carrying on of those two great things—work for the relief of the ill and the sufferings of humanity, and the teaching of the spiritual truths which should bring us back into the presence of our Heavenly Father" (J. Reuben Clark, Jr., in Conference Report, Apr. 1937, p. 22).

First mission: the messiahship

His divine messiahship is the matter of first magnitude for us. It is the center of our considerations at this conference, of our religion, of our lives. The Book of Mormon declares plainly that "it is upon the rock of our Redeemer, who is Christ, the Son of God, that ye must build your foundation" (Helaman 5:12).

Jesus plainly taught that we have an indispensable personal part in qualifying for the fulfillment of our high eternal possibilities. The Atonement, free gift that it is, requires that the gift be received in the way *he* prescribed, and he gave us the pattern. John writes that "Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized of John in Jordan" (Mark 1:9). The sacred ordinance was confirmed by the Spirit, and the Father spoke from heaven, saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Matthew 3:17). As he commenced his public ministry, "Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matthew 4:17). He said to Nicodemus the Pharisee, "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (John 3:5; see 3:1-9).

The scriptures plainly teach that there is more to Christ's gospel plan

than is frequently declared. Peter and the others understood these truths very well. After those at Pentecost had been touched in their hearts by the Spirit and by Peter's powerful testimony, they said, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" (Acts 2:37).

Peter's answer was plain and understandable: "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost" (Acts 2:38).

Second mission: serving others

President Clark in the statement earlier quoted referred to the vital second mission of Christ—that unselfish work "for the relief of the ills and the sufferings of humanity," which the Master plainly declared to be as important as the other elements of his message in our qualifying for eternal life. In the Sermon on the Mount and throughout his teachings he made it clear that he and our Father are concerned with *what kind of people we are!* The sermon concluded, you will remember, with the parable about a house built on a foundation of stone and another built on sand (see Matthew 7:24–27).

Jesus referred repeatedly to the old law by which they had been governed—and then fitted those teachings into the higher and holier context of the law of love he had come to invoke among God's children. He was not content with the old levels of concept and conduct. He wanted those who were the salt of the earth, the light of the world, to rise to nobler heights than the old law had required: "Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, . . . But I say unto you" (Matthew 5:21–22). He taught them that "except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 5:20).

Then came the direct question: "What do ye more than others?" (Matthew 5:47). His teachings explain the kind of people we are expected to be in our relationships not only with the Almighty but with our families and others and with ourselves.

Christ established the standard of our responsibility as he answered the contentious questioner who asked, "Which is the great commandment in the law?" (Matthew 22:36). Jesus said that love of God with heart, soul, and mind is "the first and great commandment" (Matthew 22:38), and love of neighbor the second like unto it. He added, "On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets" (Matthew 22:40).

The Apostle James called the second great commandment the "royal law" (James 2:8), and Paul told the Galatians that "all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" (Galatians 5:14).

The parable of the good Samaritan supplied the answer to the lawyer's next question, the one that followed "And who is my neighbour?" (Luke 10:29). The Samaritan alone of three passersby mentioned gave the help he did because that was the kind of man he was. He had acquired the habit of helpfulness through persistent experience in helping, noticing needs, and reaching out in response to them.

Church members' compassionate service

In the challenging times in which we live, remarkable evidence of man's humanity yet abounds. It is seen in help being offered in compassionate service in every ward and stake in the Church through our Relief Society ladies, Young Women's and children's groups, priesthood quorums, home and visiting teachers, Boy Scouts; in the

fact that every missionary across the earth, as part of his calling, is committed to regular community service—Christian service. It is seen in the great work of our young representatives in the refugee camps. The Church itself has responded to large-scale needs locally and nationally and internationally, and as Christian individuals and families we are striving to understand and carry out our heaven-mandated responsibilities to “walk uprightly before God, imparting to one another . . . according to . . . needs and . . . wants” (Mosiah 18:29).

Shortly before his death, Joseph Smith wrote these words: “[We are] to feed the hungry, to clothe the naked, to provide for the widow, to dry up the tear of the orphan, to comfort the afflicted, whether in this church, or in any other, or in no church at all, wherever [we find] them” (*Times and Seasons*, 16 Mar. 1842, p. 732).

In recent days we have had the honor of having again in our home as a guest a noble, quiet man from Mali, West Africa, an elder in the Church, who has taught his people how to dig wells for themselves and how to use the water on gardens which miraculously produce fresh vegetables and grain that grow on land which heretofore has grudgingly yielded only meager crops of millet. Literacy and health programs have been introduced.

Chapel dedication in a leper colony

Many other special examples of the strength of Christ’s mission crowd the memory. I share just one or two. Some years ago I was privileged to dedicate a chapel built by the Church in the Kalaupapa leper colony on the island of Molokai in the Hawaiian Islands. The experience was tender and touching and unforgettable.

A musical number by the branch choir, comprising most of the members

of the branch, was a poignant highlight. They came forward haltingly from the congregation, many being helped by others to the front of the small, attractive building. They arranged themselves in choir grouping, some of them literally leaning for support against each other. The sight was one that will linger in memory. Many were blind and many halt and lame. They literally supported each other as they sang hymns of praise and thanksgiving to God.

There were a lot of tears at Kalau-papa that day.

“But teacher, the tomb was empty”

As Easter time approaches, let me share with you the tender story of an eleven-year-old boy named Philip, a Down’s syndrome child who was in a Sunday School class with eight other children.

Easter Sunday the teacher brought an empty plastic egg for each child. They were instructed to go out of the church building onto the grounds and put into the egg something that would remind them of the meaning of Easter.

All returned joyfully. As each egg was opened, there were exclamations of delight at a butterfly, a twig, a flower, a blade of grass. Then the last egg was opened. It was Philip’s, and it was empty!

Some of the children made fun of Philip. “But, teacher,” he said, “teacher, the tomb was empty.”

A newspaper article announcing Philip’s death a few months later noted that at the conclusion of the funeral eight children marched forward and put a large empty egg on the small casket. On it was a banner that said, “The tomb was empty.”

With John of old, we bear especial witness and testify that “the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world” (1 John 4:14) and that a major

purpose of his sacred mission was to teach us how to love and serve one another.

I thank God for the Holy Savior, for the compassionate Christ, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

Elder Yoshihiko Kikuchi

Brothers and sisters, my wife and I learned so many faith-promoting missionary stories about Elders George Q. Cannon and Joseph F. Smith, and many other missionaries' wonderful spiritual experiences while we were serving in Hawaii (see George Q. Cannon, *My First Mission*, 2nd ed. [Salt Lake City: Juvenile Instructor Office, 1882]; and Joseph Fielding Smith, *Life of Joseph F. Smith* [Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1938]).

Joseph F. Smith's mission to Hawaii

I feel so strongly that I should share with you the missionary experiences of Elder Joseph F. Smith. He was sent by the Brethren as a missionary when he was fifteen years of age. At the age of five he had lost his father, and at fourteen he had lost his mother. The record shows that he labored in Maui and in Kohala on the Big Island. Then he was transferred to the island of Molokai as the presiding elder when he was sixteen years old. Every day he and his companion, Elder Thomas A. Dowell, visited the several small branches, proselyting, healing the sick, and casting out evil spirits. With the Saints they read the scriptures and the beautiful teachings of the Savior, and they retold the story of the Restoration. Many members were indifferent and had an apathetic attitude because of false reports about the Church and the Prophet Joseph Smith.

The two companions traveled from the east to the west on Molokai. Their food was scarce, and they traveled about thirty miles every day under the hot sun without water. One day

Elder Smith's companion almost didn't make it. That day they finally reached the home of Mr. and Mrs. Myers, a German family. This couple treated them kindly and lovingly and gave them food and lodging for several days. Not only that, but Mr. Myers furnished Elder Smith with a good riding horse so he could visit several branches. Elders Smith and Dowell were guided by the Spirit every day. They worked hard and brought converts, as well as bringing so many back into activity.

Sister Ma Manuhii's loving care

One day Elder Smith was taken desperately ill with a raging fever. He was given a priesthood blessing, but he remained ill. He almost passed away. His condition was very critical on many occasions. For the next three months, he was tenderly cared for by a native brother and his wife. This young couple did everything possible to save the young missionary's life and gave him the best they had through tender fatherly and motherly love, even fasting and praying for many days. This young missionary never forgot a kindness and never forsook a friend. He always treated and honored this wonderful Hawaiian lady, Ma Manuhii, as his own Hawaiian mother.

Many years later this boy again visited the Islands in the company of a member of the Presiding Bishopric, Bishop Charles W. Nibley, who later became a member of the First Presidency. As they landed in the harbor at Honolulu, many native Saints greeted them. They brought lots of leis and all kinds of beautiful native flowers. Both

of them were loaded with leis upon leis. The young man, who was now an old man, had more than anyone else. A great Hawaiian band was playing a welcome to them and even played Mormon music.

Then Bishop Nibley explained in his journal one touching little incident:

"It was a beautiful sight to see the deep-seated love, the even tearful affection, that these people had for him. In the midst of it all I noticed a poor, old blind woman tottering under the weight of about ninety years, being led in. She had a few choice bananas in her hand. It was her all—her offering. She was calling, 'Iosepa, Iosepa!' [means 'Joseph, Joseph!'] Instantly, when he saw her, he ran to her and clasped her in his arms, hugged her, and kissed her over and over again, patting her on the head saying, 'Mama, Mama, my dear old Mama!' And with tears streaming down his cheeks he turned to me and said, 'Charley, she nursed me when I was a boy, sick and without anyone to care for me. She took me in and was a mother to me!'"

Bishop Nibley continued:

"O, it was touching—it was pathetic. It was beautiful to see the great, noble soul in loving, tender remembrance of kindness extended to him, more than fifty years before; and the poor old soul who had brought her loving offering—a few bananas—it was all she had—to put into the hand of her loved Iosepa" (*Life of Joseph F. Smith*, pp. 185–86).

Brothers and sisters, this Iosepa was President Joseph F. Smith, sixth President of the Church. What can we learn from this story? Sister Ma Manuhii had no idea that this little sixteen-year-old boy would someday be President of the Church. She didn't expect anything from him. She helped him because she loved the Lord's missionary with the pure love of God (see Moroni 7:47). This Hawaiian couple honored, respected, loved, and took

care of the missionaries as the Lord's messengers because they had the pure love of God. That respect and reverence remained with her until she died.

Elder Smith was seasoned and matured by the Lord in the mission field, and his love, developed and cultivated by this beautiful Hawaiian mother, never left his heart. "With tears streaming down his cheeks . . . , 'Charley, she nursed me when I was a boy, sick and without anyone to care for me. She took me in and was a mother to me!'"

Love brings others into the fold

Brothers and sisters, this type of love, kindness, and thoughtfulness must—MUST—exist in our missionary and reactivation work. This "love of God" (1 Nephi 11:22, 25) is the spirit of missionary work and the spirit of reactivation. This "love of God" is the spirit of conversion. This "love of God" is the spirit of nurturing. "It is the most desirable above all things" (1 Nephi 11:22), and it is "the most joyous to the soul" (1 Nephi 11:23). Brothers and sisters, let's show our noble example like this beautiful Hawaiian mother, not only by feeding the missionaries, but by bringing this love as we take missionaries to part-member families, less-active members, or nonmembers within the framework of the home teaching and visiting teaching programs. These people will be touched by this love.

When Nephi saw the Savior, he exclaimed, "Yea, it is the love of God, which sheddeth itself abroad in the hearts of the children of men" (1 Nephi 11:22). With this love, when you and I work with full-time missionaries, combining our efforts, we can bring many converts and reactivated members to the temple. Your example will teach the missionaries. When they return to their wards and stakes, they will emulate your example.

Missionaries, you must be so *clean, pure, and diligent*. Obey and observe all the mission rules “with exactness” (Alma 57:21). Like Joseph F. Smith, be *studious* in the scriptures (see 1 Nephi 11:25). Exercise your “*exceeding faith*”; do “*not doubt*” (Alma 57:26). Put your “*trust in God*” (Alma 57:27). Above all, you must cultivate the real missionary quality, “*charity . . . the pure love of Christ*” (Moroni 7:47).

I testify to you that as Moroni promised us, when we “*pray unto the Father with all the energy of heart*,” we “*may be filled with this love*, which he hath bestowed upon all who are true followers of his Son, Jesus Christ” (Moroni 7:48; italics added). When we work together—missionaries, leaders, and members—the Lord will bless us as he did Nephi and Lehi, the sons of Helaman.

The scripture explains:

“There was exceedingly great prosperity in the church, insomuch that there were thousands who did join . . . and were baptized unto repentance.

“And . . . the work of the Lord did prosper unto the baptizing and uniting [to me, reactivating] to the church of God, many souls, yea, even tens of thousands. . . .

“ . . . The Lord is merciful unto *all who will, in the sincerity of their hearts, call upon his holy name*.

“ . . . The gate of heaven [will be] open unto all, even to those who will believe on the name of Jesus Christ, who is the Son of God” (Helaman 3:24, 26–28; italics added).

Brothers and sisters, I humbly testify to you that God lives. Jesus is the Christ. He loves us. As we emulate his love, we can bring wonderful brothers and sisters back into this fold. This is his Church. President Benson is his prophet. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Monson

Elders Marion D. Hanks and Yoshihiko Kikuchi of the Seventy have just spoken to us.

The choir and congregation will now join in singing “How Firm a Foundation,” following which we shall hear from Elder Alexander B. Morrison of the Seventy.

The chorus and congregation sang “How Firm a Foundation.”

Elder Alexander B. Morrison

Importance of spiritual nourishment

One of the abiding tragedies of Nephite society was its failure to maintain spiritual strength through constant spiritual nourishment. As strength waned, the effects of spiritual malnutrition were quick to be felt. In the book of Mosiah we read that during *one period of relative spiritual strength*, “there began to be much peace again in the land; . . . And the Lord did visit them and prosper them” (Mosiah 27:6–7).

Yet only a few years later the Church was full of wickedness. From Alma chapter 4 we read:

“And thus, in this eighth year of the reign of the judges, there began to be great contentions among the people of the church; yea, there were envyings, and strife, and malice, and persecutions, and pride, even to exceed the pride of those who did not belong to the church of God.

“ . . . And the wickedness of the church was a great stumbling-block to those who did not belong to the church;

and thus the church began to fail in its progress" (Alma 4:9–10).

The lesson is clear: if we do not constantly receive the spiritual nourishment needed daily, we will soon—as individuals and societies—be in dire straits, bereft of God's protection, cut off from the healing influences of the Spirit. Just as one who is weakened by malnutrition soon may fall prey to infectious disease, so too will we, if spiritually weakened, be ready prey for the adversary and his legions of dupes and devils.

Jesus is the living water

What, then, is the source of the spiritual nourishment we need? Where can it be found? Jesus, as always, had the answer. To the Samaritan woman at Jacob's well, He proclaimed, "Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life" (John 4:14).

The woman, puzzled and unsure of the meaning of Jesus' words and not knowing His true identity, exclaimed, "I know that Messiah cometh, which is called Christ: when he is come, he will tell us all things" (John 4:25).

Then said Jesus, in words of such calm assurance and power that they ring in our hearts two millennia later, "*I that speak unto thee am he*" (John 4:26; italics added).

Jesus, then, is the living water which we require for constant nourishment of our spirits.

Jesus is the bread of life

Jesus' position as the source of essential spiritual sustenance is further illustrated in His glorious sermon to the multitude at Capernaum, as described in the sixth chapter of John. "I am the bread of life," He said; "he that cometh to me shall never hunger;

and he that believeth on me shall never thirst" (John 6:35).

Jesus, then, is both the bread of life and the living water needed to nourish our spirits and to keep us spiritually strong.

Nourish through the scriptures

To faithful souls who labor in His service, in whatever calling, Jesus gives the blessing of acting as His undershepherds, charged with nourishing the sheep of His pasture and the lambs of His fold. How do wise undershepherds fulfill that sacred responsibility with honor and energy, striving always to be true and faithful to the trust reposed in them? The scriptures provide the guidelines within which faithful servants carry out sacred tasks.

Faithful undershepherds nourish with the good word of God, as occurred in the "Zion society" phase of Nephite history. Moroni wrote, "And after they had been received unto baptism, . . . they were numbered among the people of the church of Christ; and their names were taken, that they might be remembered and nourished by the good word of God" (Moroni 6:4).

Faithful servants of the master use the scriptures to learn and teach the grand and glorious principles of salvation and exaltation. Wrote Paul to Timothy:

"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:

"That the man of God may be perfect" (2 Timothy 3:16–17).

The gift of the scriptures, which testify of Christ, is free to all. "Whosoever will may lay hold upon the word of God, which is quick and powerful, which shall divide asunder all the cunning and the snares and the wiles of the devil, and lead the man of Christ in a strait and narrow course across that everlasting gulf of misery which is prepared to engulf the wicked—and land

their souls . . . at the right hand of God in the kingdom of heaven" (Helaman 3:29–30).

Christ is at the center of the scriptures. Said He of them, "Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me" (John 5:39).

Indeed, *all* truth, both spiritual and temporal, testifies of Him. When we learn to read the "signs, and wonders, and types, and shadows" properly (Mosiah 3:15), with the eyes of faith, we will realize that all of history, all of science, all of nature, all divinely revealed knowledge of any sort testifies of Him. He is the very personification of truth and light, of life and love, of beauty and goodness. All that He did was done out of love. In Nephi's words, "He doeth not anything save it be for the benefit of the world; for he loveth the world, even that he layeth down his own life that he may draw all men unto him" (2 Nephi 26:24).

Nourish through covenants

Faithful undershepherds nourish through commitment to sacred covenants which bind the children of God to their Father and His glorious Son. In a remarkable revelation given to the Prophet Joseph Smith on April 26, 1832, Jesus pointed out the supernal power of sacred and solemn agreements between man and God: "I, the Lord, am bound when ye do what I say; but when ye do not what I say, ye have no promise" (D&C 82:10).

Wise undershepherds are never casual in their commitment to Christ and His cause and do all in their power to encourage others to honor sacred agreements solemnly made in the Lord's house.

Nourish one by one

Faithful servants nourish by focusing on the individual. God loves us one

by one. How eloquently the Savior taught that lesson in the masterful parable of the lost sheep found in Luke 15. The parable tells of a shepherd who was prepared to leave the main flock of sheep—the ninety and nine—and go out into the wilderness in search of the one straggler which was lost.

"And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing.

"And when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and neighbours, saying unto them, Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost" (Luke 15:5–6).

Note the attention paid to the individual. It must have been at best a nuisance and most likely dangerous for the shepherd to leave the ninety and nine and go out into the wilderness to find the lost sheep. For one thing, wildernesses tend to be dangerous and lonely places where unwary travelers can get into a great deal of trouble. And what about the worries the shepherd must have had as he thought about the flock left behind without a shepherd's care to safeguard its members from predators, accidents, acts of nature, and so on? After all, anyone who knows anything about sheep understands just how prone they are to get into trouble spontaneously, without anyone having to help them. I learned as a farm boy many years ago that sheep and trouble go together! Come to think of it, so too do people and trouble often go together!

Whenever I think of the shepherd's loving and caring efforts on behalf of the one, I'm reminded of the Savior's deep and abiding love for each of us. Oh, how He rejoices when a lost soul is found by a faithful undershepherd and then is tenderly and lovingly brought home again! "The worth of souls is great in the sight of God" (D&C 18:10).

Though even the best of us cannot love others as perfectly as Christ does, the sentiments expressed by Alma

come close. As he left the land of Zarahemla to head a mission to reclaim the apostate Zoramites, Alma expressed his love for them and his hope for their return to the fold of Christ in this way:

“O Lord, wilt thou grant unto us that we may have success in bringing them again unto thee in Christ.

“Behold, O Lord, their souls are precious, and many of them are our brethren; therefore, give unto us, O Lord, power and wisdom that we may bring these, our brethren, again unto thee” (Alma 31:34–35).

Nourish through selfless service

True undershepherds help others partake of the bread of life and the living water through selfless service. They know that service solves the seeming paradox of the scriptures: one has to *lose* his or her life to *find* it. Service, wise undershepherds understand, is the golden key which unlocks the doors to celestial halls. For many, Christ is found through serving Him. With King Benjamin, inspired undershepherds proclaim, “When ye are in the service of your fellow beings ye are only in the service of your God” (Mosiah 2:17). Armed with that understanding, they are “willing to mourn with those that mourn . . . and comfort those that stand in need of comfort, and . . . stand as witnesses of God at all times and in all things, and in all places” (Mosiah 18:9).

Nourish through humility

Wise undershepherds, in helping others partake of the bread of life and the living water, seek neither acclaim nor accolade. The honors of men are of no consequence to them. They seek only “to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with [their] God” (Micah 6:8). They become as little children, “submissive, meek, humble, patient, full of love, willing to submit to all things which the Lord seeth fit to inflict upon [them], even as a child doth submit to his father” (Mosiah 3:19).

May we all love, care for, and serve each other that all may receive the bread of life and the living water and be perfected in Christ is my prayer in the sacred name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The chorus sang “God So Loved the World” without announcement.

President Monson

Elder Alexander B. Morrison of the Seventy has spoken to us, following which the Mormon Youth Chorus sang “God So Loved the World.”

Elder David B. Haight of the Council of the Twelve Apostles will now speak to us.

Elder David B. Haight

Temple service

In the first recorded revelation of this, the last dispensation, our Lord instructed Joseph Smith in what we regard as perhaps the greatest work of this dispensation: to seal the living

to their families and progenitors (see D&C 2).

Inscribed on brass plaques in the entry of the Canadian Alberta Temple are these significant words written by Orson F. Whitney, an Apostle of eighty years ago:

Hearts must be pure to come within
these walls,
Where spreads a feast unknown to
festive halls.
Freely partake, for freely God hath
given,
And taste the holy joys that tell of
heaven.
Here learn of Him who triumphed
o'er the grave,
And unto men the keys, the kingdom
gave;
Joined here by powers that past and
present bind
The living and the dead perfection
find.

These tender words remind those who enter the temple of significant truths about their service in the temple: that all who enter may do so feeling the love of our Heavenly Father.

Hearts must be pure

"Hearts must be pure." With this phrase Elder Whitney teaches the importance of effective preparation to attend the temple. We who would attend the temple must be living in a manner which helps us be worthy to enter and fully partake of the feast of which he spoke.

We examine our worthiness to enter the temple in our annual temple recommend interviews with priesthood leaders. Our signature, with theirs, on our temple recommend testifies of our worthiness to enter the temple. How important it is to be completely honest with our bishop. To be less than completely honest with him about our worthiness creates a breach of integrity which compounds the seriousness of concealed sins.

When we present our recommend to the attendant at the temple, we reaffirm our worthiness to enter the temple. If an unresolved problem exists since we received the recommend, it would be well to obey our Lord's teach-

ing expressed in His Sermon on the Mount:

"Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee;

"Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift" (Matthew 5:23-24).

Remember that the gifts we bring to His house are not the sacrifices our ancestors of old brought to their temples, but the pure hearts of which Brother Whitney speaks. We apply the Lord's direction by ensuring that our hearts are pure by examining our lives before we approach His house. Where there is an unresolved sin, we should take the necessary penitent action to clear it.

We should also examine our relationships with our brother, or sister, or wife, or husband, or child, or parent, or anyone else who might have "ought against us." We should repair and strengthen any damaged relationship, then come to the temple.

The truly humble and obedient take this preparation a step further. They clear their hearts of any feelings which may be out of harmony with the sacred environment and sacred experiences they will encounter in the temple. They will be mindful that feelings of anger, hostility, fear, frustration, haste, or any preoccupation with matters outside the temple will interfere with their ability to fully partake of the feast available within the temple—which is a feast of the Spirit. Those kinds of feelings are left outside the temple when we enter.

The endowment: power from on high

A temple is a place in which those whom He has chosen are endowed with power from on high—a power which enables us to use our gifts and capabilities with greater intelligence and increased effectiveness in order to bring

to pass our Heavenly Father's purposes in our own lives and the lives of those we love.

As he dedicated the cornerstone of the Salt Lake Temple on April 6, 1853, President Brigham Young made this observation about the endowment:

"Your *endowment* is, to receive all those ordinances in the House of the Lord, which are necessary for you, after you have departed this life, to enable you to walk back to the presence of the Father, passing the angels who stand as sentinels, . . . and gain your eternal exaltation in spite of earth and hell" (in *Journal of Discourses*, 2:31).

We receive the blessings of which President Young spoke when we are endowed. Our understanding of the significance of the endowment expands as we regularly participate in the holy ordinances in behalf of those deceased.

The Lord's way of learning

Some participate in the feast of which Orson F. Whitney spoke more fully than others. Those who receive most understand the teaching methods the Lord uses in the temple. They bring to the temple hearts and minds prepared to participate in the Lord's way of learning.

Others receive less and may be somewhat disappointed in their temple experience; perhaps they do not understand how the Lord teaches us in His house. Elder John A. Widtsoe said:

"We live in a world of symbols. No man or woman can come out of the temple endowed as he should be, unless he has seen, beyond the symbol, the mighty realities for which the symbols stand" ("*Temple Worship*," *Utah Genealogical and Historical Magazine*, Apr. 1921, p. 62).

Understanding the endowment

If you may have been somewhat confused, unclear, or concerned about

your temple experience, I hope you will return again and again. When you return, come with an open, seeking, contrite heart, and allow the Spirit to teach you by revelation what the symbols can mean to you and the eternal realities which they represent. Elder Widtsoe thoughtfully provided some counsel about how you might do this. He spoke of the Prophet's first vision as a model of how revelation, in the temple and elsewhere, is received.

"How do men receive revelations?" he asked. "How did the Prophet Joseph Smith obtain his first revelation, his first vision? He desired something. In [a grove of trees], away from human confusion, he summoned all the strength of his nature; there he fought the demon of evil, and, at length, because of the strength of his desire and the great effort that he made, the Father and the Son descended out of the heavens and spoke eternal truth to him" ("*Temple Worship*," p. 63).

Elder Widtsoe observed that it was the strength of Joseph's desire and the great effort which enabled him to receive his vision of the Father and the Son. Desire and effort are likewise required if we would receive revelation to understand the ordinances of the endowment. He wrote:

"Revelation . . . is not imposed upon a person; it must be drawn to us by faith, seeking and working. . . . To the man or woman who goes through the temple, with open eyes, heeding the symbols and the covenants, and making a steady, continuous effort to understand the full meaning, God speaks his word, and revelations come. . . . The endowment which was given by revelation can best be understood by revelation; and to those who seek most vigorously, with pure hearts, will the revelation be greatest" ("*Temple Worship*," p. 63).

Revelation comes in response to our desire and seeking; then we feast on the "holy joys that tell of heaven."

President Benson has given us a promise about this. He said:

"Now, by virtue of the sacred priesthood in me vested, . . . I promise you that, with increased attendance in the temples of our God, you shall receive increased personal revelation to bless your life as you bless those who have died" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1987, p. 108; or *Ensign*, May 1987, p. 85).

Blessings of temple service

Come to the temples worthily and regularly. Not only do you bless those who are deceased, but you may freely partake of the promised personal revelation that may bless your life with power, knowledge, light, beauty, and truth from on high, which will guide you and your posterity to eternal life. What person would not want these blessings, as expressed by the Prophet Joseph Smith at the dedication of the Kirtland Temple. He said, "We ask thee, Holy Father, that thy servants may go forth from this house armed with thy power, and that thy name may be upon them, and thy glory be round about them, and thine angels have charge over them" (D&C 109:22).

When you return from the temple, share with your children and loved ones at home your feelings about what you experienced. Speak not of the sacred ordinances but of the love and power manifest by them.

Let your children see you behave—toward them and your eternal companion—in kindlier, more loving ways. Your consistently positive expressions about what you experience in the temple will create in your children a desire to receive those same blessings and provide them with strong motivation to resist the temptations which could disqualify them from temple blessings.

Through the exercise of the sealing power of the holy priesthood, generations are bound together in patriarchal chains from the newborn baby "as far back as the Lord shall reveal" (Brigham Young, in *Journal of Discourses*, 3:372).

An eternal family

When sweethearts kneel at the temple altar and are joined by the power of the holy priesthood for time and all eternity, an eternal family is organized and is created. It is to exist throughout all eternity. It may become eternal in its attributes by the constant fidelity of a husband and wife to one another and by their faithfulness to their covenants with their Heavenly Father.

May I invite those of you who are sealed to a spouse, whether living or departed, to recall for a moment your memories of that day of days when you knelt together at the altar and were sealed as husband and wife for time and all eternity. Do you remember any of the words of the ceremony? Do you recall sacred feelings, a glimpse of eternal promises? Can you feel again the power that created a relationship which will transcend death? Can you recall the feeling of love of our Heavenly Father for you and your companion, which was manifest on that occasion?

If time and the realities of everyday life have eroded your recollections of what you felt and received when you were sealed, you should return to the temple and participate again as proxies for the departed in that same sealing ordinance. Take advantage of that opportunity. Do it together as husband and wife. In this manner you may deepen your understanding of the covenants you made and renew the promises you received on that day when you were sealed as eternal companions.

Faithfulness ensures full blessings

For some of you these words may reopen wounds you wish closed and buried. There may be a bitter tinge to the memories that those words invoke because that which once seemed so glorious and promising to you little resembles the reality you now experience. Your eternal marriage may have been destroyed by infidelity or apostasy, or perhaps it is being eroded by indifference, neglect, or inattention to covenants. You may have been a faithful spouse but are now involuntarily a lonely, struggling, single parent.

May your hearts be lifted by my testimony that your faithfulness to your endowment and sealing covenants assures you a fulness of the blessings promised. The infidelity, sin, or indifference of a spouse need not adversely affect *your* faithfulness to *your* covenants. I testify to you that the promised blessings are yours through your faithfulness to your covenants. I testify that no matter how long and difficult the road, you can, with the support of loving leaders and the constant love of our Savior, arrive at your eternal destination.

Become worthy of a temple recommend

Now a word to those who may not now qualify for a temple recommend. Work with your priesthood leaders and change your life in order to worthily enter the temple. Then attend regularly.

You will come to know our Lord there. As your relationship with Him grows and deepens, you will grow increasingly confident in His love, in His compassion for your difficulties, in His power to bear you up and bring you back into His presence. As you avail yourself of that divine assistance, you will come to know that there can

be no challenge, no difficulty, no obstacle in your life which you and He together cannot overcome. To that I testify!

Ordinances bear witness of Christ

Each of the ordinances of the Lord's house bears witness "of Him who triumphed o'er the grave"—of the reality of His atonement and His resurrection. We are taught of immortality and eternal life, which are realities for us through His atonement. We are blessed by covenants and ordinances to prepare us to eventually reenter His divine presence.

I close, as I began, with Elder Whitney's inspired verse:

Hearts must be pure to come within
these walls,
Where spreads a feast unknown to
festive halls.
Freely partake, for freely God hath
given,
And taste the holy joys that tell of
heaven.
Here learn of Him who triumphed
o'er the grave,
And unto men the keys, the kingdom
gave;
Joined here by powers that past and
present bind
The living and the dead perfection
find.

I pray that we will take full advantage of every opportunity to regularly come to our Lord's temple and there freely partake of the feast and blessings He provides, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The chorus sang "I Know That My Redeemer Lives" without announcement.

President Monson

Elder David B. Haight of the Council of the Twelve has just addressed us, followed by the Mormon

Youth Chorus singing “I Know That My Redeemer Lives.”

Elder Marvin J. Ashton of the Council of the Twelve Apostles will be our concluding speaker for this session.

Elder Marvin J. Ashton

Bashing

When King David was pleading for mercy in the fifty-seventh Psalm, he cried, “My soul is among lions: and I lie even among them that are set on fire, even the sons of men, whose teeth are spears and arrows, and their tongue a sharp sword” (Psalm 57:4).

In the world today we are victims of many who use their tongues as sharp swords. The misuse of our tongues seems to add intrigue and destruction as the media and private persons indulge in this pastime. In the vernacular of the day, this destructive activity is called *bashing*. The dictionary reports that to bash is to strike with a heavy, crushing blow.

Such a popular behavior is indulged in by far too many who bash a neighbor, a family member, a public servant, a community, a country, a church. It is alarming also how often we find children bashing parents and parents bashing children.

“Nay, speak no ill”

We as members of the Church need to be reminded that the words “Nay, speak no ill” are more than a phrase in a musical context but a recommended way of life (see *Hymns*, no. 233). We need to be reminded more than ever before that “if there is anything virtuous, lovely, or of good report or praiseworthy, we seek after these things” (Articles of Faith 1:13). If we follow that admonition, there is no time for the dastardly hobby of bashing instead of building.

Some think the only way to get even, to get attention or advantage, or to win is to bash people. This kind of behavior is never appropriate. Often-times character and reputation and almost always self-esteem are destroyed under the hammer of this vicious practice.

How far adrift we have allowed ourselves to go from the simple teaching “If you can’t say something good about someone or something, don’t say anything” to where we now too often find ourselves involved in the bash business.

Even though reports and rumors pertaining to misconduct and misbehavior are readily available and can make good ammunition for those who would injure, bash, or damage, the Savior reminds us that he who is without sin may cast the first stone (see John 8:7). Ugly reports and conversations are always available to those who would promote the sordid and sensational. None of us is yet perfect. We each have failings that aren’t terribly difficult to detect—especially if that is the aim. Through microscopic examination one can find in almost every life incidents or traits that can be destructive when they are magnified.

Recognizing the good

We need to get back to basic principles of recognizing the good and the praiseworthy within the family. Home evening needs to be reemphasized and used as a tool or foundation for wholesome communication and teaching, but

never as an opportunity to bash other family members, neighbors, teachers, or Church leaders. Family loyalty will emerge when we reinforce the good and the positive and bridle our negative thoughts as we seek after those things that are of good report.

There will always be those in the days ahead who will be inclined to bash us and others, but we cannot allow a heavy, crushing blow to destroy us or to deter our personal or church progress.

Bernard Baruch, an adviser to six United States presidents, was once asked whether he was ever disturbed by attacks from enemies. He said, "No man can humiliate or disturb me. I won't let him."

We are reminded that Jesus Christ, the only perfect person to ever walk the earth, taught us through quiet example to say nothing or to be silent in stressful times in our lives rather than to spend time and energy bashing for whatever purpose.

Charity: the antidote for bashing

So what is the antidote for this bashing that hurts feelings, demeans others, destroys relationships, and harms self-esteem? Bashing should be replaced with charity. Moroni described it this way:

"Wherefore, my beloved brethren, if ye have not charity, ye are nothing, for charity never faileth. Wherefore, cleave unto charity, which is the greatest of all. . . .

" . . . Charity is the pure love of Christ, and it endureth forever" (Moroni 7:46-47).

Charity is, perhaps, in many ways a misunderstood word. We often equate charity with visiting the sick, taking in casseroles to those in need, or sharing our excess with those who are less fortunate. But really, true charity is much, much more.

Real charity is not something you give away; it is something that you ac-

quire and make a part of yourself. And when the virtue of charity becomes implanted in your heart, you are never the same again. It makes the thought of being a basher repulsive.

Perhaps the greatest charity comes when we are kind to each other, when we don't judge or categorize someone else, when we simply give each other the benefit of the doubt or remain quiet. Charity is accepting someone's differences, weaknesses, and shortcomings; having patience with someone who has let us down; or resisting the impulse to become offended when someone doesn't handle something the way we might have hoped. Charity is refusing to take advantage of another's weakness and being willing to forgive someone who has hurt us. Charity is expecting the best of each other.

None of us needs one more person bashing or pointing out where we have failed or fallen short. Most of us are already well aware of the areas in which we are weak. What each of us does need is family, friends, employers, and brothers and sisters who support us, who have the patience to teach us, who believe in us, and who believe we're trying to do the best we can in spite of our weaknesses. Whatever happened to giving each other the benefit of the doubt? Whatever happened to hoping that another person would succeed or achieve? Whatever happened to rooting for each other?

Bashing is of Satan

It should come as no surprise that one of the adversary's tactics in the latter days is stirring up hatred among the children of men. He loves to see us criticize each other, make fun or take advantage of our neighbor's known flaws, and generally pick on each other. The Book of Mormon is clear about where all anger, malice, greed, and hate come from.

Nephi prophesied that in the last days the devil would “rage in the hearts of the children of men, and stir them up to anger against that which is good” (2 Nephi 28:20). By the looks of what we constantly see depicted in the news media, it appears that Satan is doing a pretty good job. In the name of reporting the news, we are besieged with sometimes graphic depictions—too often in living color—of greed, extortion, violent sexual crimes, and insults between business, athletic, or political opponents.

The Sermon on the Mount

Throughout the scriptures a common thread seems to emerge. Let’s consider first the Sermon on the Mount, which to our knowledge was the first sermon Jesus Christ taught His newly called disciples. The overriding theme of the Savior’s sermon, which in many ways is the ultimate handbook on coming unto Him, seems to center on the virtues of love, compassion, forgiveness, and long-suffering—in other words, those qualities that enable us to deal with our fellowmen more compassionately. Let’s look specifically at the Savior’s message to the Twelve. They (and we) were admonished to “be reconciled to [our] brother” (Matthew 5:24), to “agree with [our] adversary quickly” (5:25), to “love [our] enemies, [to] bless them that curse [us], [to] do good to them that hate [us], and [to] pray for them which despitefully use [us], and persecute [us]” (5:44). We are told, “Whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also” (5:39).

It seems interesting that the first principles the Lord Jesus Christ chose to teach His newly called Apostles were those that center on the way we treat each other. And then what did He emphasize during the brief period He spent with the Nephites on this conti-

nent? Basically the same message. Could this be because the way we treat each other is the foundation of the gospel of Jesus Christ?

Come unto Christ by loving others

During an informal fireside address held with a group of adult Latter-day Saints, the leader directing the discussion invited participation by asking the question, “How can you tell if someone is converted to Jesus Christ?” For forty-five minutes those in attendance made numerous suggestions in response to this question, and the leader carefully wrote down each answer on a large chalkboard. All of the comments were thoughtful and appropriate. But after a time, this great teacher erased everything he had written. Then, acknowledging that all of the comments had been worthwhile and appreciated, he taught a vital principle: “The best and most clear indicator that we are progressing spiritually and coming unto Christ is the way we treat other people.”

Would you consider this idea for a moment—that the way we treat the members of our families, our friends, those with whom we work each day is as important as are some of the more noticeable gospel principles we sometimes emphasize.

“Charity never faileth”

Last month the Relief Society celebrated its 150th anniversary. Its motto, “Charity Never Faileth,” has been a way of life for its members and others around the globe.

Imagine what could happen in today’s world—or in our own wards, or families, or priesthood quorums and auxiliaries—if each of us would vow to cherish, watch over, and comfort one another. Imagine the possibilities!

One young woman, serving in a stake Relief Society presidency and at the time also laboring under the pressure of an especially challenging project, lost her temper one morning during a presidency meeting. The cause of her unhappiness had little to do with the question at hand and was related more to the fact that at the time she was laboring under intense home pressure on a major task and was feeling frustrated and frazzled. Afterward, she was embarrassed at her behavior and immediately called to apologize for her outburst. Her friends in the presidency were generous and told her not to think another thing about it. Still she wondered if they might think less of her, now that they'd seen her at less than her best. But that evening the doorbell rang around dinnertime, and there stood the other members of the presidency with dinner in hand. "We knew when you lost your cool this morning that you must just be worn out. We thought a little supper might help. We want you to know we love you." The young woman was amazed. In spite of her outburst that morning, her friends were there to offer support rather than criticism. Rather than seize the opportunity to bash her, they were filled with the spirit of charity.

Be one who nurtures and who builds. Be one who has an understanding and a forgiving heart, who looks for the best in people. Leave people better than you found them. Be fair with your competitors, whether in business, athletics, or elsewhere. Don't get drawn into some of the parlance of our day and try to "win" by intimidation or by undermining someone's character. Lend a hand to those who are frightened, lonely, or burdened.

If we could look into each other's hearts and understand the unique challenges each of us faces, I think we would treat each other much more

gently, with more love, patience, tolerance, and care.

Governing our tongues

If the adversary can influence us to pick on each other, to find fault, bash, and undermine, to judge or humiliate or taunt, half his battle is won. Why? Because though this sort of conduct may not equate with succumbing to grievous sin, it nevertheless neutralizes us spiritually. The Spirit of the Lord cannot dwell where there is bickering, judging, contention, or any kind of bashing.

Even in biblical times James warned us of the necessity to govern our tongues:

"Even so the tongue is a little member, and boasteth great things. Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth!

"And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell" (James 3:5-6).

True conversion begets love

Once again may I emphasize the principle that when we truly become converted to Jesus Christ, committed to Him, an interesting thing happens: our attention turns to the welfare of our fellowmen, and the way we treat others becomes increasingly filled with patience, kindness, a gentle acceptance, and a desire to play a positive role in their lives. This is the beginning of true conversion.

Let us open our arms to each other, accept each other for who we are, assume everyone is doing the best he or she can, and look for ways to help leave quiet messages of love and encouragement instead of being destructive with bashing.

Again James reminds us, "The fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace" (James 3:18).

May God help us individually and collectively to know and teach that bashing should be replaced with charity today and always, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Monson

Elder Marvin J. Ashton of the Council of the Twelve Apostles has concluded this session of the conference.

We are grateful to the owners and operators of the many television and radio stations and cable and satellite

systems for offering their facilities as a public service to bring the proceedings of this conference to a large audience in many areas of the world.

The Mormon Youth Chorus will now sing "Christ the Lord Is Risen Today." The benediction will be given by Elder Earl C. Tingey of the Seventy, and the conference will then be adjourned until two o'clock this afternoon.

The chorus sang "Christ the Lord Is Risen Today."

Elder Earl C. Tingey offered the benediction.

SATURDAY AFTERNOON SESSION

The second general session of the 162nd Annual General Conference convened in the Tabernacle on Temple Square in Salt Lake City, Utah, on Saturday, April 4, 1992, at 2:00 P.M. President Gordon B. Hinckley, First Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted this session.

Music for this session was provided by a Relief Society choir from the Brigham City Utah Region. Evelyn M. Harris conducted the choir, and Clay Christiansen was at the organ.

At the beginning of the meeting, President Hinckley made the following remarks:

President Gordon B. Hinckley

My beloved brethren and sisters, we welcome you to the second general session of the 162nd Annual General Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. President Ezra Taft Benson was with us this morning. We excuse him this afternoon; he will be watching the proceedings of the conference on television.

We extend our greetings to all who are in attendance and to all who are participating by means of television, cable, or radio, and to the many who are watching in stake centers in various parts of the world where the conference is being carried by satellite transmission.

We express our gratitude to the owners and operators of the many radio and television stations and cable and satellite systems for their cooperation in making these proceedings available to members and friends of the Church in many countries.

We note that Elders M. Russell Ballard, Robert E. Sackley, and W. Mack Lawrence are seated on the stand in the Assembly Hall.

The music for this session will be provided by a Relief Society choir from the Brigham City Utah Region, under the direction of Sister Evelyn M. Harris, with Brother Clay Christiansen at the organ.

The choir will begin this session by singing "I Believe in Christ." The invocation will then be offered by Elder Hartman Rector, Jr., of the Seventy.

The choir sang "I Believe in Christ."

Elder Hartman Rector, Jr., offered the invocation.

President Hinckley

This beautiful choir will now sing "More Holiness Give Me." President

Thomas S. Monson will then present the General Authorities and general officers of the Church for your sustaining vote.

The choir sang "More Holiness Give Me."

The Sustaining of Church Authorities and Officers

President Thomas S. Monson

My brothers and sisters, I shall now present to you the General Authorities and general officers of the Church for your sustaining vote.

It is proposed that we sustain Ezra Taft Benson as prophet, seer, and revelator and President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints; Gordon B. Hinckley as First Counselor in the First Presidency; and Thomas S. Monson as Second Counselor in the First Presidency. Those in favor may manifest it. Those opposed, if any, may manifest it.

It is proposed that we sustain Howard W. Hunter as President of the Council of the Twelve Apostles and the following as members of that council: Howard W. Hunter, Boyd K. Packer, Marvin J. Ashton, L. Tom Perry, David B. Haight, James E. Faust, Neal A. Maxwell, Russell M. Nelson, Dallin H. Oaks, M. Russell Ballard, Joseph B. Wirthlin, and Richard G. Scott. Those in favor, please manifest it. Any opposed.

It is proposed that we sustain the Counselors in the First Presidency and the Twelve Apostles as prophets, seers, and revelators. All in favor, please manifest it. Contrary, if there be any, by the same sign.

Brother Heber B. Kapp, husband of Sister Ardeth G. Kapp, has been called to preside over the Canada Vancouver Mission. It will therefore be necessary to release her as General President of the Young Women. We also release her counselors, Jayne B. Malan and Janette C. Hales, and all members of the Young Women General Board.

All who wish to join in an expression of profound appreciation to these sisters for their excellent service may do so by the uplifted hand.

It is proposed that we sustain Sister Janette C. Hales as General President of the Young Women, with Virginia H. Pearce as first counselor and Patricia P. Pinegar as second counselor. Those in favor, please manifest it. Any opposed, by the same sign.

It is proposed that we sustain the other General Authorities and general officers of the Church as presently constituted. Those in favor, please manifest it. Any opposed may manifest it.

It appears that the voting has been unanimous in the affirmative. Thank you, brothers and sisters, for your continued vote of love and confidence.

We invite the newly called Young Women General Presidency to take their places on the stand at this time.

President Hinckley

Brother Ted E. Davis will now read the auditors' report. Following

this, Brother F. Michael Watson, secretary to the First Presidency, will present the statistical report of the Church for the year 1991.

The Church Audit Committee Report for 1991

Ted E. Davis

To the First Presidency of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints:

The Audit Committee is independent of all Church officers, employees, and operations and has access to all records relevant to the committee's responsibility. We have reviewed the adequacy of controls over receipts and expenditures of funds and other procedures that safeguard the assets of the Church and its controlled organizations, including budgeting, accounting and auditing systems, and the related financial statements of the Church for the year ending 31 December 1991.

Expenditures of Church funds for the year were authorized by the Council on the Disposition of the Tithes, composed of the First Presidency, the Council of the Twelve, and the Presiding Bishopric, as prescribed by revelation. The Appropriations Committee and Budget Committee administer major expenditures within approved budgets.

The Auditing Department staff consists of certified public accountants and similarly qualified auditors and is independent of all other departments. It performs financial audits, opera-

tional audits, and audits of computer systems for all Church operations worldwide. Incorporated businesses owned or controlled by the Church, for which accounts are not maintained in the Finance and Records Department, are audited by the Church's internal auditors, independent professional auditing firms, or government regulatory agencies. Audits of local units are performed locally. Local audit procedures are established and audit reports are reviewed by the Auditing Department.

Based on our review of financial and operating controls and the audit reports and responses, we are of the opinion that the budgeting, accounting, auditing, and other control procedures have maintained adequate accountability for Church assets and obligations. In all material respects, all Church funds received and expended during the year ended 31 December 1991 have been controlled and accounted for in accordance with established Church policies and procedures.

Respectfully submitted,

Church Audit Committee
David M. Kennedy
Merrill J. Bateman
Ted E. Davis

The Church Statistical Report for 1991

F. Michael Watson

For the information of the members of the Church, the First Presi-

dency has issued the following statistical report concerning the growth and status of the Church as of December 31, 1991. (Statistics are based on

1991 reports available prior to this conference.)

Church units

Stakes	1,837
Districts	527
Missions	267
Wards and branches	18,810
Nations and territories with organized wards or branches ...	138

(These statistics reflect an increase of 53 stakes and 720 wards and branches during 1991.)

Church membership

Total membership.....	8,120,000
Children of record baptized during 1991.....	75,000
Converts baptized during 1991.....	297,770

Missionaries

Full-time missionaries	43,395
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Prominent members who have passed away since last April

Elder Derek A. Cuthbert of the First Quorum of the Seventy; Elder Joseph Anderson, emeritus General Authority; Frances LaRue Carr Longden, former counselor in the Young Women General Presidency and widow of John Longden, Assistant to the Twelve; Leone Watson Doxey, former counselor in the Primary General Presidency; and Wilford G. Edling, chairman of the Church Audit Committee.

President Hinckley

Elder L. Tom Perry of the Council of the Twelve will be our first speaker at this session. He will be followed by Elder Angel Abrea of the Seventy.

Elder L. Tom Perry

Alma's decision to teach God's word

In the fourth chapter of the book of Alma, we find one of the many accounts contained in this book where the chief spiritual leader was troubled with the performance of his people. We read:

"And it came to pass in the eighth year of the reign of the judges, that the people of the church began to wax proud, because of their exceeding riches, and their fine silks, and their fine-twined linen, and because of their many flocks and herds, and their gold and their silver, and all manner of precious things, which they had obtained by their industry; and in all these things

were they lifted up in the pride of their eyes, for they began to wear very costly apparel.

"Now this was the cause of much affliction to Alma, yea, and to many of the people whom Alma had consecrated to be teachers, and priests, and elders over the church; yea, many of them were sorely grieved for the wickedness which they saw had begun to be among their people" (Alma 4:6-7).

It was a time of decision for Alma. In his role as chief high priest, he had been attempting to protect his people from falling into sin by teaching them the gospel. In his role as chief judge, he had been administering the laws of the

land. As he found the wickedness of the people increasing, he could not continue to divide his time between these dual roles. Again we read from the book of Alma regarding his decision:

“And he selected a wise man who was among the elders of the church, and gave him power according to the voice of the people, that he might have power to enact laws according to the laws which had been given, and to put them in force according to the wickedness and the crimes of the people.

“Now this man’s name was Nephihah, and he was appointed chief judge; and he sat in the judgment-seat to judge and to govern the people.

“Now Alma did not grant unto him the office of being high priest over the church, but he retained the office of high priest unto himself; but he delivered the judgment-seat unto Nephihah.

“And this he did that he himself might go forth among his people, or among the people of Nephi, that he might preach the word of God unto them, to stir them up in remembrance of their duty, . . . that he might pull down, by the word of God, all the pride and craftiness and all the contentions which were among his people, seeing no way that he might reclaim them save it were in bearing down in pure testimony against them” (Alma 4:16–19).

Alma understood a basic fact of life. There is no way of caring for the problems of mankind unless the great majority of them have been taught and have subscribed their lives to a code of conduct which will keep them from falling into sin. The Lord, in the very beginning, established for our first earthly parents commandments and covenants which, if observed and obeyed, will keep us from the heartache and waste of unrighteous living. As we consider conditions in the world today, we should be asking the question, How can we more effectively

prevent the loss resulting from an overwhelming increase in spiritual, emotional, and physical problems now afflicting mankind? It seems as if we are spending too much of our time and energy in repairing the damage of sin and not enough time in teaching the Lord’s law as a foundation on which we can govern our lives.

The need for more laborers

From the Old Testament we find Ezekiel telling us that the Lord reproved those who did not help feed His sheep. We read:

“My sheep wandered through all the mountains, and upon every high hill: yea, my flock was scattered upon all the face of the earth, and none did search or seek after them. . . .

“ . . . Neither did my shepherds search for my flock, but the shepherds fed themselves, and fed not my flock; . . .

“[And] thus saith the Lord God; Behold I, even I, will both search my sheep, and seek them out” (Ezekiel 34:6, 8, 11).

Wasn’t this also one of the Savior’s laments as He performed His earthly ministry? We read from the Gospel of Matthew:

“And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every [manner of] sickness and every disease among the people.

“But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd.

“[And] saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few;

“Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest” (Matthew 9:35–38).

The shortage of laborers in the Lord's vineyard continues now, as it did in previous times.

The prophet's call to serve

History has recently recorded the words of a prophet calling for every worthy and able young man to serve a full-time mission. The response to the prophet's voice has been heartwarming. Many thousands of young men have listened to his clarion call and have come forward to fulfill honorable, successful missions, declaring the gospel of our Lord and Savior to ever-increasing numbers. Their harvest has been truly remarkable.

As the numbers increase, the call of the prophet was again heard to open the doors of nations to the preaching of the gospel. We have all witnessed a miracle of the power of the united prayers of the Saints. Doors have been opened to the preaching of the gospel in nations never dreamed of or hoped for just a few years ago. Now the demand for increased numbers of full-time missionaries is greater than ever before. And again we issue the call for every worthy young man to heed the voice of the prophet to serve as a full-time missionary. We call on you bishops and branch presidents to see that every worthy and able young man has an opportunity to go forth into the mission field. Many of our young women have also served in the mission field. They have been some of the most productive missionaries we have.

President Kimball made the following statement regarding young women serving: "Many young women have a desire to serve a full-time mission, and they are also welcome in the Lord's service. This responsibility is not on them as it is on the elders, but they will receive rich blessings for their unselfish sacrifice. The Lord is pleased [with] their willingness to bring souls to

him" (*President Kimball Speaks Out* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1981], p. 30).

These valiant young men and young women go into the mission field bearing a strong witness of the mission of our Lord and Savior, giving true Christian service, and teaching with faith and conviction.

An urgent need for more couples

In addition to the need for more young men and women to serve, there is an urgent need for couples. Each time we visit a mission, the universal request is for more couples. The need is great for mature couples who are financially able, possessing strong testimonies and in reasonably good health. Their entry into the mission field adds strength and maturity to our missionary effort.

With the opportunities to labor so plentiful, we need experienced couples to work with those newly converted to the gospel, making sure that the seeds which have fallen on good ground will be nourished and cultivated in order that the tares of a previous life-style will not spring up and choke out the good plants. You mature couples have years of experience in studying, teaching, and administering in the wards and branches of the Church. That experience is so desperately needed throughout the world to prevent the tender new plants from being overcome by worldliness.

You are the ones who can build a firm root structure, which will support the new converts in the truths of the gospel in this life and help them become worthy to receive blessings in the eternities to come.

Experiences of missionary couples

Listen to the experiences of those couples who have gone forth to serve.

Quoting a few lines from a letter recently received in the Missionary Department from the president of the Oklahoma Tulsa Mission, we read:

"The Wilsons, who recently returned home, did an outstanding job in reactivating the membership. They were able to see two couples go to the temple, have eighteen baptisms, increase ward activity from an average of 136 to over 180 during just the year that they labored in the Nevada Ward. When they came into the mission field, they had just purchased a new truck. During their mission, they put 29,000 miles on the vehicle. This couple was truly dedicated to strengthening the Lord's work in this area. Now they are retired, living in St. George, and would like to go on another mission in the near future."

The letter continues:

"Brother Williams is the branch president in the Lebanon Branch. President and Sister Williams have done an outstanding job in reactivating members and also getting a genealogical library going in the town."

Sister Williams writes:

"I am so proud of my husband. He really helps the young elders a lot. He gives them the support they need. President Williams is in the height of his glory when he can take them out on a discussion.

"Since we opened our new library, I have been just overwhelmed with the work, with both nonmembers and members. The local Genealogical Association (all nonmembers) meets once a month in our chapel, holding their genealogical meetings. They have all become interested in our new library and the wonderful research tools we have. I have trained each staff member as completely as I can so they will have full knowledge of all we have in the library since, alas, I will have to go home someday. Darn it!"

In another letter, from the Prices, who served in Australia, they write:

"I admit it is hard to leave growing and changing grandchildren, but we share the joys of our missions with our families. Knowing that our children and our little grandchildren are praying for us every night is a sustaining and inspiring feeling each day. And besides, it is all for our Father in Heaven, who has promised us that our family bonds will never be broken if we serve Him."

Entries in your life's history

Is this not the special time of decision for all of you young adults of full-time missionary age and all of you special mature older couples? Have you ever sat down and contemplated what kind of entries you will prepare for your life's history? Will yours be one composed of slides and videos of worldly acquisitions of boats and motor homes, of travel and entertainment for personal gratification and amusement?

Or will your history express the joy you have experienced in preaching and teaching the message of our Lord and Savior to all who would hear your voice? May you decide, as Alma did, to go forth among the people, preaching the word of God unto them to stir them up in remembrance of their duty, to pull down the pride, craftiness, and contentions among them, that they may be reclaimed and saved by you in bearing pure testimony to them.

Bishops and branch presidents, only one additional missionary couple called from your ward or branch would mean an increase of over eight thousand couples in our missionary force. Oh, how they're needed!

The field is white

To you who will accept the call to go forth and serve, I can promise you that your good name will never be for-

gotten in this world or in the eternities to come. So again we issue the clarion call and pray that the Lord of the harvest will send forth laborers in increased numbers, for the field is white, all ready for a bounteous harvest (see D&C 4:4).

That this is His work in which we are engaged is my solemn witness to you in the name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, amen.

Elder Angel Abrea

Prepare for afflictions

At a time when persecution intensified toward the newly organized Church, the Lord said to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery, "Be patient in afflictions, for thou shalt have many; but endure them, for, lo, I am with thee, even unto the end of thy days" (D&C 24:8).

Tribulation, afflictions, and trials will constantly be with us in our sojourn here in this segment of eternity, just as the Savior said, "In the world ye shall have tribulation" (John 16:33). Therefore, the great challenge in this earthly life is not to determine how to escape the afflictions and problems, but rather to carefully prepare ourselves to meet them.

I say prepare ourselves because it demands persistent effort to develop patience as a personal attribute. In practicing patience, one comes to understand it and to acquire it.

Have patience in affliction

From Liberty Jail, in a time of anguish and deep suffering for the gospel's sake, the Prophet Joseph Smith wrote the following message to the Saints:

"Dear brethren, do not think that our hearts faint, as though some

President Hinckley

Elder L. Tom Perry of the Council of the Twelve Apostles has just addressed us.

We will now be pleased to hear from Elder Angel Abrea of the Seventy, who will be followed by Elder William R. Bradford of the Seventy.

strange thing had happened unto us, for we have seen and been assured of all these things beforehand, and have an assurance of a better hope than that of our persecutors. Therefore God hath made broad our shoulders for the burden. We glory in our tribulation, because we know that God is with us, that He is our friend, and that He will save our souls" (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, sel. Joseph Fielding Smith [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1938], p. 123).

We must have patience in order to withstand pain and grief without complaint or discouragement, which detract from the Spirit. It's necessary to have patience in the face of tribulation and persecution for the cause of truth, which sets an example because the manner in which we bear our cross will be an influence to others to help lighten their load.

Our patience must be in the same manner and in the same spirit as was that of the sons of Mosiah when they were entrusted with the task to "go forth among the Lamanites, thy brethren, and establish my word; yet ye shall be patient in long-suffering and afflictions, that ye may show forth good examples unto them in me, and I will make an instrument of thee in my hands unto the salvation of many souls" (Alma 17:11).

Patience must be our constant companion during the journey which carries us toward that great goal: "Continue in patience until ye are perfected"—the counsel the Lord gave to the elders of the Church (D&C 67:13).

It should be made clear that we are not talking here about a passive patience which waits only for the passing of time to heal or resolve things which *happen to us*, but rather a patience that is active, which *makes things happen*. Such was the patience Paul described in his epistle to the Romans when he used the words "by patient continuance in well doing" (Romans 2:7).

Perhaps one of the best examples of patience which gives us an eternal perspective of its application in our lives is found in the words of Peter: "For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God" (1 Peter 2:20).

Have faith in God's wisdom

Patience in affliction and adversity means to persist firmly and never forsake that which we know to be true, standing firm with the hope that in the Lord's due time we will gain an understanding of that which we do not understand now and which causes us suffering.

Then the promise in Malachi will become a reality: "Then shall ye return, and discern . . . between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not" (Malachi 3:18).

Into the life of the faithful sister whose son was killed while on a mission came many questions which raced through her mind and those asked by disbelievers, creating doubts such as, "Why was my son killed if he was a good missionary and an excellent son?

My son was serving the Lord and was a great example to his brothers who are preparing to go into the mission field. Why?"

Patience in affliction and suffering means answering as she did to all those questions: "I don't know, nor do I have all the answers, but one thing I do know is that someday, in the Lord's divine timetable, I shall see my son again and be reunited with him."

Wasn't the reply of this sister prompted by the same spirit which gave place to the words of Nephi: "I know that he loveth his children; nevertheless, I do not know the meaning of all things"? (1 Nephi 11:17). What a beautiful example of faith which brings a feeling of assurance while facing the unknown!

Endure with faith in Christ

In the face of persecution and threats to which the early Christians were subjected, patience filled with testimony was manifest in their faith and hope in Christ as recorded in the words of Paul:

"We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair;

"Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed;

"Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body. . . .

"Knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present us with you. . . .

"For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day.

"For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory" (2 Corinthians 4:8-10, 14, 16-17).

“Not as I will, but as thou wilt”

Patience in affliction and suffering describes the life of Christ, the great exemplar. In the moments of great suffering and pain which transpired in Gethsemane, He was able to express in fervent prayer, “O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt” (Matthew 26:39), giving us the example and a frame of reference for a life of obedience and perseverance despite circumstances or external conditions in which we could find ourselves.

How many times do we conclude our prayers with, “Let this cup pass from me”?

Under circumstances when the symbolic cup might represent sickness, pain, anxiety, unemployment, or the suffering of a loved one, are we able to continue our prayer with, “Nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt”? This very word, this key word *nevertheless*, conveys the firm conviction that we are placing everything in the hands of the Lord.

When at times on life’s journey it becomes our lot to travel with the criticism of skeptics, the hate of some, the rejection of others, the impatience of many, or the betrayal of a friend, we must be able to pray in such a manner that an abiding faith and a strong testimony that the Lord will be with us to the end will compel us to say, “Nevertheless, Father, Thy will be done, and with Thy help, in patience I will follow firmly on the path that takes me back to Thee.”

The Lord’s assurance

In the year 1833, through the Prophet Joseph Smith, the Lord consoled the Saints, who had been “afflicted, and persecuted, and cast out from the land of their inheritance” (D&C 101:1), with words of comfort and hope, saying, “Let your hearts be

comforted . . . ; all flesh is in mine hands; be still and know that I am God” (D&C 101:16).

To Enoch, who was slow of speech and in a time of great tribulation, the Lord said, “Open thy mouth, and it shall be filled, and I will give thee utterance, for all flesh is in my hands, and I will do as seemeth me good” (Moses 6:32).

To Joseph Smith in moments of trial, and referring to his enemies, the Lord said, “Hold on thy way, . . . for their bounds are set, they cannot pass” (D&C 122:9).

These key words of counsel were given when those receiving them were passing through adverse circumstances: “all flesh is in my hands”; “know that I am God”; “I will do as seemeth me good”; “their bounds are set, they cannot pass.” In moments of trial these words appeal to patience and perseverance, founded in principles which are a testimony in and of themselves.

Knowing God helps us endure

In the words of the Savior, life eternal is to know God (see John 17:3), and that implies a knowledge of His attributes and a testimony of them. To know God consists of knowing even ourselves, for as the Prophet Joseph Smith said, “If men do not comprehend the character of God, they do not comprehend themselves” (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, p. 343). To know God is much more than to talk about God. Elder Bruce R. McConkie explained that it is “to think what he thinks, to feel what he feels” (*Doctrinal New Testament Commentary*, 3 vols. [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1973], 1:762).

How can we do otherwise than patiently endure the trials of life if we know God and understand that He is omnipotent? With Nephi we can say that “he is mightier than all the earth”

(1 Nephi 4:1). We know and can testify of His omniscience, and with Lehi we can say, "All things have been done in the wisdom of him who knoweth all things" (2 Nephi 2:24).

Based on that knowledge, cemented in a strong testimony of the attributes of our Heavenly Father, the faithful Latter-day Saint—instead of despairing because a goal on his or her agenda was not realized, because his or her timetable does not bring a solution to the problems, or because comfort does not come to calm the troubles of today—waits patiently for fulfillment of promises, according to the Lord's timetable, the Lord who "knoweth all the times which are appointed unto man" (Alma 40:10). The faithful Latter-day Saint waits patiently because, certainly, faith, "the assurance of things hoped for" (JST, Hebrews 11:1), is exercised with the conviction that the promises will be fulfilled "in his own time, and in his own way, and according to his own will" (D&C 88:68).

"Stand fast, ye Saints of God"

God does live and He does fulfill His promises, and to the many testimonies given, I wish to add mine. I know that even in times of affliction and tribulation, if we patiently endure in faith, blessings of comfort and hope will come into our lives, and we will be able to partake of that "incomprehensible joy" of which Ammon and his brothers received (see Alma 27:17–18; 28:8).

Therefore, in the words of Joseph Smith, "Stand fast, ye Saints of God, hold on a little while longer, and the storm of life will be past, and you will be rewarded by that God whose servants you are, and who will duly appreciate all your toils and afflictions for Christ's sake and the Gospel's" (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, p. 185).

These things I say in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

William R. Bradford

"I want my life back!"

On our present assignment, my wife and I live a long way away from our children. This means the letters go back and forth. I would like to read a paragraph from a letter one of our daughters recently sent:

"I've become a nurse. Four of the six kids have the flu. I'm changing my ambitions from psychiatrist to nurse. Anyway, nobody in this family is sick in the head; we are just all sick. I hate it when the kids are sick." Then in capital letters, "I WANT MY LIFE BACK!"

When we read the letter, we gave each other a knowing smile. All of our children are caught up in a very busy life. It is what they call "the fast lane."

But those last words, "I WANT MY LIFE BACK," have stuck in my

mind, and the more I have thought about them the more concerned I've become. This concern has persuaded me to say something about uncluttering our lives and getting back to basics.

Problems of a cluttered life

The story is told of a boy who arrived home from school and found his father standing at the open door looking into a very cluttered house. "Is Mother home?" asked the boy. His father answered, "I can't see her, but I know she's in there somewhere. I can hear sobbing."

This would be funny if it were not true in so many cases. I believe that a cluttered life can create a great deal of sorrow and sadness and be the cause of

much sobbing. I also believe that there are a great many people in the so-called "fast lane" that want their lives back.

A cluttered life is a life that you do not have control of. It is a life in which the things you have surrounded yourself with and allow to use up your time are controlling you and negatively influencing your happiness and eternal progress.

Material clutter

Our lives can become cluttered by many things. Some are obvious, such as material things, the stuff we collect. I really wish I were able to give a lesson on how to prioritize the material things—how to sort them, dispose of some, and put the rest in order—but I'm not qualified.

The last time I worked on that kind of a project, I spent nine hours moving things around, changing them from one box to another, stacking some here and some there. When I was finished I was so proud of myself. Then I realized that all I had really done was move them from one place to another.

My wife says that I have a subconscious rule that I must move things from one place to another at least a hundred times before I can bring myself to give them away. Suffice it to say, if you need help in this, there are better experts than I to teach you.

But how well I know that we can surround ourselves with the material things to the extent that we have no time for the spiritual. Look around and you will see all the gadgets and toys and the nice and the fun things that cause us to squander and pay and to wander and play.

Subtle clutter

Other things that clutter our lives and use up our time are not as obvious

as the material. They are more subtle and just seem to evolve, taking control of us.

Whenever I think of something subtle—you know, kind of hidden, something we know is there if we stop to think about it but do not suspect it of cluttering up or negatively influencing our lives—whenever I think of something subtle like this, I know that Satan is busy at his work.

Nothing suits the devil better than to become a silent partner with us. He knows that we have agency and are at liberty to make choices for ourselves. He also knows that while in mortality we are subject to time. If by his subtle means he can become our silent partner, he can then influence us to make wrong choices that use up our time unwisely and prevent us from doing that which we should.

We give our lives to that which we give our time. As I have said, while here in mortality we are subject to time. We also have agency and may do what we will with our time. Let me repeat: We give our lives to that which we give our time.

How to unclutter our lives

I have learned that it is very difficult, if not impossible, to unclutter one's life by starting at the top of the pile with the idea that the solution is to just get things sorted and better organized. It is nice to get better organized, but that is not enough. Much has to be discarded. We must actually get rid of it.

To do this we need to develop a list of basics, a list of those things that are indispensable to our mortal welfare and happiness and our eternal salvation. This list must follow the gospel pattern and contain the elements needed for our sanctification and perfection. It must be the product of inspiration and prayerful judgment between

the things we really need and the things we just want. It should separate need from greed. It must be our best understanding of those things that are important as opposed to those things that are just interesting. It should have nothing to do with trying to stay in the fast lane.

We need to examine all the ways we use our time: our work, our ambitions, our affiliations, and the habits that drive our actions. As we make such a study, we will be able to better understand what we should really be spending our time doing.

The family comes first

At the top of our list of basics, we will surely have the family. Next only to our devotion to God, the family comes first. Their temporal and spiritual well-being is of vital importance, and so there must be work to provide for it. This means hard work. Although there has to be a balance and time for the fun things, they cannot outweigh the need for a cooperative effort by all the members of the family to provide for their spiritual and temporal needs. To work is a commandment from God. It is the pattern for the happiness of individuals and the family and is the strength of both the Church and society.

A mother should never allow herself to become so involved with extras that she finds herself neglecting her divine role. A father must not let any activity, no matter how interesting or important it may seem, keep him from giving of himself in the one-on-one service and close, constant care of each member of the family.

The titles of Mother and Father will persist after this life. All that we may acquire and any titles we may earn which are worldly will pass away. In the meantime they may be cluttering up our lives and affecting our eternal outcome.

Young people must learn that none of the exciting and entertaining and fun things are worth it if they take you off from the path that will lead you back home to your Heavenly Father.

Living the basics of the gospel

We must remember that a person who is not living the basics of the gospel of Jesus Christ is not living them, no matter who or what has caused it. We must also remember that a family divided is a family divided, no matter who or what divides it.

There are, then, some serious and soul-searching questions that we must ask ourselves. One of these questions would surely be, Do I have time for prayer? I don't mean just an occasional, quick, repetitious prayer that is like giving a wave of the hand to your Father in Heaven as you pass Him on your way to something important. I mean sincere, honest, "from the depths of a contrite spirit and a broken heart" prayer; kneeling in humility, demonstrating to the Holy Father that you really love him; private prayer which involves you in the process of repentance and pleading for forgiveness and allows time for pondering and waiting for the answers to come.

As you examine your list of basics, the next question would be, Do I study the scriptures? If you do, you know that Lehi saw a rod of iron, which, interpreted, means the word of God (see 1 Nephi 11:1-23). Those who held to the rod, using it as a guide at all times, came safely through the mist of darkness and arrived at the tree of life and partook of its glorious fruit (see 1 Nephi 8:19, 30).

Now the question again: Do you study the scriptures? I solemnly testify that the holy scriptures are the word of God. Constant study of them is the act of holding to the iron rod. They will guide you to the tree of life. If you are

one who has said, "I want my life back," I exhort you to go to the tree of life, where you will find the pure love of God.

God's path is simple and straight

With an uncluttered life, you will not be so busy doing terrestrial things that you do not have time to do those things which are celestial. God's plan is a plan of simplicity. It involves being obedient to simple laws—laws that have within them an automatic blessing and happiness for obedience and an automatic punishment and unhappiness for their disobedience.

I urge you to clear away the clutter. Take your life back. Use your willpower. Learn to say no to those things that will rob you of your precious time and infringe upon your agency to choose to live in exactness to God's plan of happiness and exaltation.

Don't let the subtle influences of Satan take away any part of your life. Keep it under your own control and operated by your own agency. This life is a probationary period. It is a marvelous gift of time during which we can learn to be like our Heavenly Father

by following the teachings of His Son, Jesus Christ. The path He leads us on is not a cluttered path. It is simple and straight and lighted by the Spirit.

It is my humble prayer that by our choices we may preserve our individual agency from the subtleness of Satan and live our lives bright and clear and on the path that leads us back to the presence of our Holy Father. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

We have listened to Elder Angel Abrea, who is a native of Argentina, and to William R. Bradford, who presently presides over the work in the northern part of South America with headquarters in Quito, Ecuador. We thank these brethren.

The choir and congregation will now join in singing "Now Let Us Rejoice in the Day of Salvation." Following the singing, Elder Adney Y. Komatsu of the Seventy will address us.

The choir and congregation sang "Now Let Us Rejoice."

Elder Adney Y. Komatsu

An invitation to come back

My brothers and sisters, I would like to recall to your minds the statement of invitation made by the First Presidency in December of 1985, and I quote:

"At this Christmas season we rejoice in the blessings that come of membership and *activity* in this Church whose head is the Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ. In deep sincerity we express our love and gratitude for our brethren and sisters everywhere.

"We are aware of some who are inactive, of others who have become

critical and are prone to find fault, and of those who have been disfellowshipped or excommunicated because of serious transgressions.

"To all such we reach out in love. We are anxious to forgive in the spirit of Him who said: 'I, the Lord, will forgive whom I will forgive, but of you it is required to forgive all men' (D&C 64:10).

"We encourage Church members to forgive those who may have wronged them. To those who have ceased *activity* and to those who have become critical, we say, 'Come back. Come

back and feast at the table of the Lord, and taste again the sweet and satisfying fruits of fellowship with the saints' " (*"An Invitation to Come Back," Church News*, 22 Dec. 1985, p. 3; italics added).

Using activities to fellowship

While most of us in the Church may think of activities as primarily fun and games, there is a part that *activities* play in the Church that reaches far beyond this shallow perception.

For those who have experienced Church discipline, feelings of isolation and loneliness are very real. This is the case whether the discipline is informal or formal. In the case of formal excommunication, the isolation and loneliness are more than a feeling. This action results in a person's name being removed from the Church membership records and the withdrawal of the gift of the Holy Ghost given at the time of baptism and confirmation.

Most of us have experienced times of isolation and loneliness in our lives. Have you ever been in a city, airport, train station, or the like and, while surrounded by hundreds or even thousands of people, yet felt alone? Have you on occasion, when uniquely challenged in your family as a child, a teen, or even an adult, felt alone while living with your family under the same roof? Have you on other occasions felt alone and lonely even while sitting among others in a Church meeting or a school class?

The fact that people are physically nearby, regardless of the setting, does not always equate to feelings of acceptance, understanding, inclusion, and fellowship. In too many cases the reverse may be true. Feelings of acceptance and inclusion come when someone invites us into their circle of friendship and activity. Far beyond fun and games, activities represent at least one non-threatening way to accept, include,

understand, and fellowship others. Perceived in this manner, activities become another vehicle to show charity, love, kindness, forgiveness, service, and to include and not exclude. Amulek said, "If ye do not remember to be charitable, ye are as dross, which the refiners do cast out, (it being of no worth)" (Alma 34:29).

Those whose formal Church participation may be limited for a season can experience the warmth of loving arms and open hearts as they are invited to participate in activities in the Church. Their season of limitation is softened as they are warmly included in family home evenings, dinners, socials, firesides, roadshows, dramas, interest groups, homemaking activities, family outings, ward camps, reunions, and the like.

Through activities, individuals can sense a feeling of being included, wanted, and needed. Participating in Church activities provides opportunities to associate with members of the quorum, Relief Society, or ward on neutral grounds. Again, their season of limitation can be softened as they are fellowshipped and included socially in activities. Their participation in activities is often the forerunner to their participation in meetings of worship on the Sabbath, even though for a time they must participate in worship and teaching settings as spectators.

Planning activities with a purpose

Some critical issues are:

Are activities an integral part of your family, your quorum, Relief Society, or Church unit?

Are activities planned and conducted on a regular basis that include those working their way back into full fellowship and those who are less active in the fold?

Do your activities represent safe harbors of acceptance, brotherhood, and sisterhood?

Are you helping those who are struggling to recapture their faith and testimony look forward to the day when their privilege and blessings to participate fully in Church might be reinstated?

Through a variety of family, priesthood, Relief Society, or ward and stake activities, we can create a setting that—

1. Helps all of us participate in wholesome activities that are free from the sensuality and coarseness of many activities offered and promoted by the world.

2. Places a premium on including rather than excluding individuals and groups regardless of age, station in life, Church callings, and so on.

3. Offers opportunities for participation to the active, those who are less active, and those who are winning their way back to full fellowship.

4. Displays forgiveness and forgetting as individuals feel the warmth and concern of loving arms and open hearts. When we do not forgive and forget, the Lord warns:

“My disciples, in days of old, sought occasion against one another and forgave not one another in their hearts; . . . for this evil they were afflicted and sorely chastened.

“Wherefore, I say unto you, that ye ought to forgive one another; for he that forgiveth not his brother his trespasses standeth condemned before the Lord; for there remaineth in him the greater sin” (D&C 64:8-9).

When a person returns to full fellowship in the Church as a result of love, kindness, and forgiveness from those who care, the feeling of joy is almost inexpressible. This depth of joy is described in the Book of Mormon when Alma met Ammon in a joyful meeting:

“Now the joy of Ammon was so great even that he was full; yea, he was swallowed up in the joy of his God,

even to the exhausting of his strength; and he fell again to the earth.

“Now was not this exceeding joy? Behold, this is joy which none receiveth save it be the truly penitent and humble seeker of happiness” (Alma 27:17-18).

Activities can be so much more than fun and games and so much more than momentary pleasure. Activities planned with purpose and carried out with real efforts aimed at helping participants on their path to perfection bring joy everlasting and occupy an important place in the Church.

We need to be reminded that activities sponsored by the Church are not new. In each administration of the thirteen modern-day prophets who have presided over the Church, activities have been an important part of the Latter-day Saint way of life. Church activities continue to be one means to include rather than exclude, to be a participant rather than a spectator, to find moments of joy among challenges of adversity, to promote socialization and unity rather than isolation and disharmony, and to offer neutral and nonjudgmental circumstances for those who are winning their way back to full fellowship in the Church with the Saints and household of God.

Come unto Christ

In closing I would like to continue quoting from the First Presidency's Christmas message:

“We are confident that many have longed to return, but have felt awkward about doing so. We assure you that you will find open arms to receive you and willing hands to assist you.

“This is the Christmas season when we honor the birth of the Lord who gave His life for the sins of all. We know there are many who carry heavy burdens of guilt and bitterness. To such we say, ‘Set them aside and give

heed to the words of the Savior: "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. . . . For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light" (Matt. 11:28-30) ("An Invitation to Come Back," p. 3).

The First Presidency continues by saying:

"We plead with you. We pray for you. We invite and welcome you with love and appreciation.

"Sincerely your brethren, The First Presidency" (p. 3).

May I invite all to come unto Christ. Come back and partake of His joy. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

Elder Adney Y. Komatsu of the Seventy has just addressed us.

We shall now be pleased to hear from Elder Richard G. Scott of the Council of the Twelve, and he will be followed by Elder Dallin H. Oaks, also of the Council of the Twelve.

Elder Richard G. Scott

The tragic scars of abuse

I speak from the depths of my heart to each one of you who have been scarred by the ugly sin of abuse, whether you are a member or non-member of the Church. I would prefer a private setting to discuss this sensitive subject and ask that the Holy Spirit help us both that you may receive the relief of the Lord from the cruelty that has scarred your life.

Unless healed by the Lord, mental, physical, or sexual abuse can cause you serious, enduring consequences. As a victim you have experienced some of them. They include fear, depression, guilt, self-hatred, destruction of self-esteem, and alienation from normal human relationships. When aggravated by continued abuse, powerful emotions of rebellion, anger, and hatred are generated. These feelings often are focused against oneself, others, life itself, and even Heavenly Father. Frustrated efforts to fight back can degenerate into drug abuse, immorality, abandonment of home, and, tragically in extreme cases, suicide. Unless corrected, these feelings lead to despondent lives, discordant marriages, and even the transition from victim to abuser. One awful result is a deepening lack of trust in others, which becomes a barrier to healing.

Scars need not be permanent

To be helped, you must understand some things about eternal law. Your abuse results from another's unrighteous attack on your freedom. Since all of Father in Heaven's children enjoy agency, there can be some who choose willfully to violate the commandments and harm you. Such acts temporarily restrict your freedom. In justice, and to compensate, the Lord has provided a way for you to overcome the destructive results of others' acts against your will. That relief comes by applying eternal truths with priesthood assistance.

Know that the wicked choice of others cannot completely destroy your agency unless you permit it. Their acts may cause pain, anguish, even physical harm, but they cannot destroy your eternal possibilities in this brief but crucial life on earth. You must understand that *you are free to determine to overcome the harmful results of abuse*. Your attitude can control the change for good in your life. It allows you to have the help the Lord intends you to receive. No one can take away your ultimate opportunities when you understand and live eternal law. The laws of your Heavenly Father and the

atonement of the Lord have made it possible that you will not be robbed of the opportunities which come to the children of God.

You may feel threatened by one who is in a position of power or control over you. You may feel trapped and see no escape. Please believe that *your Heavenly Father does not want you to be held captive by unrighteous influence, by threats of reprisal, or by fear of repercussion to the family member who abuses you.* Trust that the Lord will lead you to a solution. Ask in faith, nothing doubting (see James 1:6; Enos 1:15; Moroni 7:26; D&C 8:10; 18:18).

I solemnly testify that when another's acts of violence, perversion, or incest hurt you terribly, against your will, you are not responsible and you must not feel guilty. You may be left scarred by abuse, but those scars need not be permanent. In the eternal plan, in the Lord's timetable, those injuries can be made right as you do your part. Here is what you can do *now*.

Seek help

If you are now or have in the past been abused, seek help now. Perhaps you distrust others and feel that there is no reliable help anywhere. Begin with your Eternal Father and his beloved Son, your Savior. Strive to comprehend their commandments and follow them. They will lead you to others who will strengthen and encourage you. There is available to you a priesthood leader, normally a bishop, at times a member of the stake presidency. He can build a bridge to greater understanding and healing. Joseph Smith taught, "A man can do nothing for himself unless God direct him in the right way; and the Priesthood is for that purpose" (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, sel. Joseph Fielding Smith [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1938], p. 364).

Talk to your bishop in confidence. His calling allows him to act as an instrument of the Lord in your behalf. He can provide a doctrinal foundation to guide you to recovery. An understanding and application of eternal law will provide the healing you require. He has the right to be inspired of the Lord in your behalf. He can use the priesthood to bless you.

Your bishop can help you identify trustworthy friends to support you. He will help you regain self-confidence and self-esteem to begin the process of renewal. When abuse is extreme, he can help you identify appropriate protection and professional treatment consistent with the teachings of the Savior.

Principles of healing

These are some of the principles of healing you will come to understand more fully:

Recognize that you are a beloved child of your Heavenly Father. He loves you perfectly and can help you as no earthly parent, spouse, or devoted friend can. His Son gave his life so that by faith in him and obedience to his teachings you can be made whole. He is the consummate healer.

Gain trust in the love and compassion of your elder brother, Jesus Christ, by pondering the scriptures. As with the Nephites, he tells you: "I have compassion upon you; my bowels are filled with mercy. . . . I see that your faith is sufficient that I should heal you" (3 Nephi 17:7-8).

Healing best begins with your sincere prayer asking your Father in Heaven for help. That use of your agency allows divine intervention. When you permit it, the love of the Savior will soften your heart and break the cycle of abuse that can transform a victim into an aggressor. Adversity, even when caused willfully by others,

unrestrained appetite, can be a source of growth when viewed from the perspective of eternal principle (see D&C 122:7).

The victim must do all in his or her power to stop the abuse. Most often the victim is innocent because of being disabled by fear or the power or authority of the offender. At some point in time, however, the Lord may prompt a victim to recognize a degree of responsibility for abuse. Your priesthood leader will help assess your responsibility so that, if needed, it can be addressed. Otherwise the seeds of guilt will remain and sprout into bitter fruit. Yet no matter what degree of responsibility, from absolutely none to increasing consent, the healing power of the atonement of Jesus Christ can provide a complete cure (see D&C 138:1–4). Forgiveness can be obtained for all involved in abuse (see Articles of Faith 1:3). Then comes a restoration of self-respect, self-worth, and a renewal of life.

As a victim, do not waste effort in revenge or retribution against your aggressor. Focus on your responsibility to do what is in your power to correct. Leave the handling of the offender to civil and Church authorities. Whatever they do, eventually the guilty will face the Perfect Judge. Ultimately the unrepentant abuser will be punished by a just God. The purveyors of filth and harmful substances who knowingly incite others to acts of violence and depravation and those who promote a climate of permissiveness and corruption will be sentenced. Predators who victimize the innocent and justify their own corrupted life by enticing others to adopt their depraved ways will be held accountable. Of such the Master warned,

“But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that

he were drowned in the depth of the sea” (Matthew 18:6).

Understand that healing can take considerable time. Recovery generally comes in steps. It is accelerated when gratitude is expressed to the Lord for every degree of improvement noted.

Forgiveness helps heal

During prolonged recovery from massive surgery, a patient anticipates complete healing in patience, trusting in others’ care. He does not always understand the importance of the treatment prescribed, but his obedience speeds recovery. So it is with you struggling to heal the scars of abuse. Forgiveness, for example, can be hard to understand, even more difficult to give. *Begin by withholding judgment.* You don’t know what abusers may have suffered as victims when innocent. The way to repentance must be kept open for them. Leave the handling of aggressors to others. As you experience an easing of your own pain, full forgiveness will come more easily.

You cannot erase what has been done, but you can forgive (see D&C 64:10). Forgiveness heals terrible, tragic wounds, for it allows the love of God to purge your heart and mind of the poison of hate. It cleanses your consciousness of the desire for revenge. It makes place for the purifying, healing, restoring love of the Lord.

The Master counseled, “Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them *who despitefully use you and persecute you*” (3 Nephi 12:44; italics added).

Bitterness and hatred are harmful. They produce much that is destructive. They postpone the relief and healing you yearn for. Through rationalization and self-pity, they can transform a victim into an abuser. Let God be the judge—you cannot do it as well as he can.

To be counseled to just forget abuse is not helpful. You need to understand the principles which will bring healing. I repeat, most often that comes through an understanding priesthood leader who has inspiration and the power of the priesthood to bless you.

Cautions in repairing damage

I caution you not to participate in two improper therapeutic practices that may cause you more harm than good. They are (1) excessive probing into every minute detail of your past experiences, particularly when this involves penetrating dialogue in group discussion; and (2) blaming the abuser for every difficulty in your life.

While some discovery is vital to the healing process, the almost morbid probing into details of past acts, long buried and mercifully forgotten, can be shattering. There is no need to pick at healing wounds to open them and cause them to fester. The Lord and his teachings can help you without destroying self-respect.

There is another danger. Detailed leading questions that probe your past may unwittingly trigger thoughts that are more imagination or fantasy than reality. They could lead to condemnation of another for acts that were not committed. I know of cases, likely few in number, where such therapy has caused great injustice to the innocent from unwittingly stimulated accusations that were later proven false. Memory, particularly adult memory of childhood experiences, is fallible. Remember, false accusation is also a sin.

Stated more simply, if someone intentionally poured a bucket of filth on your carpet, would you invite the neighbors to determine each ingredient that contributed to the ugly stain? Of course not. With the help of an expert, you would privately restore its cleanliness.

Likewise the repair of damage inflicted by abuse should be done privately, confidentially, with a trusted priesthood leader and, where needed, the qualified professional he recommends. There must be sufficient discussion of the general nature of abuse to allow you to be given appropriate counsel and to prevent the aggressor from committing more violence. Then, with the help of the Lord, you can bury the past.

I humbly testify that what I have told you is true. It is based upon eternal principles I have seen the Lord use to give a fulness of life to those scarred by wicked abuse.

The Savior's healing power

If you feel there is only a thin thread of hope, believe me, it is not a thread. It can be the unbreakable connecting link to the Lord which puts a life preserver around you. He will heal you as you cease to fear and place your trust in him by striving to live his teachings.

Please, don't suffer more. Ask now for the Lord to help you (see Mormon 9:27; Moroni 7:26, 33). Decide now to talk to your bishop. Don't view all that you experience in life through lenses darkened by the scars of abuse. There is so much in life that is beautiful. Open the windows of your heart and let the love of the Savior in. And should ugly thoughts of past abuse come back, remember his love and his healing power. Your depression will be converted to peace and assurance. You will close an ugly chapter and open volumes of happiness.

In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

Thank you, Brother Richard Scott of the Council of the Twelve.

Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Council of the Twelve will be our concluding speaker for this session.

Elder Dallin H. Oaks

Relief Society sesquicentennial

This year we are celebrating the 150th anniversary of the Relief Society, organized in Nauvoo, Illinois, on March 17, 1842. Last month's anniversary program was carried by satellite to most continents of the world. Books are being published to review the history and celebrate the worldwide sisterhood of Relief Society. Ward and stake Relief Societies are celebrating through service in their local communities. Far-reaching efforts to promote literacy will be formally announced later this year.

We are grateful for the effective leadership of President Elaine L. Jack and her counselors and board, who are directing this celebration, and for the earlier leaders and workers whose accomplishments we celebrate.

The Relief Society has great significance for every member of the Church. All of us have been blessed through the example and service of its members.

I am the beneficiary of at least four different generations of Relief Society service: my grandmother, my mother, my wife, and our daughters.

The most vivid memories of my childhood include my grandmother all dressed up to leave the farm and drive into town, resolute and cheerful in her Relief Society service. My mother's leadership in the Relief Society of one of the BYU stakes was influential in the lives of hundreds of young women being prepared for a lifetime of service in family, church, and community. I have met these women in many of my visits throughout the Church.

In Chicago, our children and I were schooled in Christian love and service by a mother and wife working in her calling as ward Relief Society president. Later, at BYU, we rejoiced as our daughters were called to leader-

ship and service in the Relief Societies of their BYU branches. The entire family enjoys benefits and blessings through Relief Society service.

Charitable work

From its beginning, the Relief Society has led out in charitable work. At the first meeting, President Emma Smith said, "Each member should be ambitious to do good" (minutes of the Female Relief Society of Nauvoo, 17 Mar. 1842, p. 13; see also "Ambitious to Do Good," *Ensign*, Mar. 1992, p. 4; quotations are taken from original documents, hereafter referred to as minutes). The minutes of those initial meetings are filled with accounts of how the sisters obtained work opportunities for the needy, took in the homeless, and made donations to help those in need of food, shelter, and schooling.

A decade after the departure from Nauvoo, sisters trained in the principles of the Relief Society were still leading in efforts to provide for those in need. In a session of conference, President Brigham Young announced that the Saints in two handcart companies were stranded by early snows and suffering in the mountains of Wyoming. He called for immediate help to rescue them, and before they left the Tabernacle many sisters had begun to gather clothing to send to the Saints in the mountains (see Kenneth W. Godfrey et al., *Women's Voices: An Untold History of the Latter-day Saints, 1830-1900* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1982], p. 269).

The commission to save souls

In the initial meetings of Relief Society, the Prophet Joseph Smith taught that the society "is not only to relieve the poor, but to save souls" (minutes, 9 June 1842, p. 63; *History of*

the Church, 5:25). A later First Presidency explained: "One of the purposes of the organization of the Relief Society was that a system might be inaugurated by which study of religious subjects, or Church doctrine and government, might be pursued by women. The administration of charity under the direction of the Bishopric . . . was to be part of their active work. But this was not intended to absorb their activities to the exclusion of the development of faith, and the advancement of women in literary, social and domestic activities of life" (in James R. Clark, comp., *Messages of the First Presidency of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 6 vols. [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1965-75], 5:217).

"To save souls opens the whole field of human activity and development," Elder John A. Widtsoe later declared. "Relief of poverty, relief of illness; relief of doubt, relief of ignorance—relief of all that hinders the joy and progress of woman. What a magnificent commission!" (John A. Widtsoe, *Evidences and Reconciliations* [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1987], p. 308).

Teaching the gospel

That commission included teaching. In a revelation given in 1830, the Lord told Emma Smith that the Prophet would authorize her "to expound scriptures, and to exhort the church, according as it shall be given thee by my Spirit" (D&C 25:7). When she was later selected to lead the Relief Society, her prophet husband referred to this revelation that she would "expound the scriptures to all" and "teach the female part of the community." He declared "that not she alone, but others, may attain to the same blessings" (minutes, 17 Mar. 1842, p. 8).

Succeeding Presidents of the Church have reemphasized this impor-

tant duty to teach, and the leaders and teachers of the Relief Society have fulfilled this responsibility with great distinction.

Organization of the Relief Society

The Relief Society was organized upon the initiative of the women of Nauvoo. Desiring to organize a society to promote sisterhood and to accomplish benevolent works, a group of women asked Eliza R. Snow to draft a constitution and bylaws. When Joseph Smith learned of this, he asked that the sisters be called together so that he could provide "something better for them than a written Constitution." One sister recalled his saying, "I will organize the women under the priesthood after the pattern of the priesthood" (Sarah M. Kimball, "Auto-Biography," *Woman's Exponent*, 1 Sept. 1883, p. 51).

We are fortunate to have careful minutes of the first two years' meetings of the Relief Society. From these minutes we know the substance of the Prophet Joseph Smith's instructions to the new organization and its members. This anniversary is an appropriate time to recall and reemphasize these prophetic directions.

In his first formal instruction to the newly founded organization, the Prophet said he was "deeply interested that [the Relief Society] might be built up to the Most High in an acceptable manner." He taught that "when instructed, we must obey that voice . . . that the blessings of heaven may rest down upon us. All must act in concert, or nothing can be done [that the Society] should move according to the ancient Priesthood" (minutes, 30 Mar. 1842, p. 22; *History of the Church*, 4:570).

The Prophet's counsel apparently sought to give this new organization the benefit of an early revelation in which the Lord instructed the newly

organized First Presidency “how you may act before me, that it may turn to you for your salvation. I, the Lord, am bound when ye do what I say; but when ye do not what I say, ye have no promise” (D&C 82:9–10). The Relief Society’s promised blessings were dependent upon its leaders and members functioning within the limits the Lord had set.

Directed by the priesthood

The next time he met with the Relief Society, Joseph Smith “exhorted the sisters always to concentrate their faith and prayers for, and place confidence in those whom God has appointed to honor, whom God has placed at the head to lead” (minutes, 28 Apr. 1842, p. 37; *History of the Church*, 4:604–5). This counsel, of course, furthered the direction in the earlier revelation on priesthood, which declared that all “authorities or offices in the church are appendages” to the Melchizedek Priesthood and that this priesthood “holds the right of presidency, and has power and authority over all the offices in the church in all ages of the world” (D&C 107:5, 8). Consequently, the Relief Society and the auxiliaries organized later have always functioned and have thrived under the direction of the presiding authorities of the priesthood.

At this same meeting, the Prophet spoke the words that President Gordon B. Hinckley recently characterized as “a charter . . . of the Relief Society of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints” (“Ambitious to Do Good,” *Ensign*, Mar. 1992, p. 4):

“This Society is to get instruction thro’ the order which God has established—thro’ the medium of those appointed to lead” (minutes, 28 Apr. 1842).

Here the Prophet declared that the Relief Society was to receive instruction and direction from the priest-

hood leaders who presided over their activities. Like the quorums of priesthood holders in the Church, the Relief Society was to be self-governing, but it was not to be an independent organization. It was an integral part of the Church, not a separate church for women.

The Prophet continued, “I now turn the key to you in the name of God and this Society shall rejoice and knowledge and intelligence shall flow down from this time—this is the beginning of better days to this Society” (minutes, 28 Apr. 1842, p. 40).

When he “turn[ed] the key,” the Prophet Joseph Smith made the Relief Society an official part of the Church and kingdom of God. This opened to women new opportunities for receiving knowledge and intelligence from on high, such as through the temple ordinances that were soon to be instituted. Similarly, as the Prophet promised them in connection with their charitable service, “If you live up to your privileges, the angels cannot be restrained from being your associates” (minutes, 28 Apr. 1842, p. 38; *History of the Church*, 4:605).

Authority and priesthood keys

President Joseph Fielding Smith taught that the Prophet’s action opened to women the possibility of exercising “some measure of divine authority, particularly in the direction of government and instruction in behalf of the women of the Church” (“Relief Society—An Aid to the Priesthood,” *Relief Society Magazine*, Jan. 1965, p. 5). President Smith explained: “While the sisters have not been given the Priesthood, . . . that does not mean that the Lord has not given unto them authority. Authority and Priesthood are two different things. A person may have authority given to him, or a sister to her, to do certain things in the Church that are binding and absolutely neces-

sary for our salvation, such as the work that our sisters do in the House of the Lord" ("The Relief Society Organized by Revelation," *Relief Society Magazine*, Jan. 1959, p. 4).

President Smith's teaching on authority explains what the Prophet Joseph Smith meant when he said that he organized the Relief Society "under the priesthood after the pattern of the priesthood." The authority to be exercised by the officers and teachers of the Relief Society, as with the other auxiliary organizations, was the authority that would flow to them through their organizational connection with The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and through their individual setting apart under the hands of the priesthood leaders by whom they were called.

No priesthood keys were delivered to the Relief Society. Keys are conferred on individuals, not organizations. The same is true of priesthood authority and of the related authority exercised under priesthood direction. Organizations may channel the exercise of such authority, but they do not embody it. Thus, the priesthood keys were delivered to the members of the First Presidency and the Quorum of Twelve Apostles, not to any organizations (see Topical Guide, "Priesthood, Keys of").

Under the priesthood authority of the bishop, the president of a ward Relief Society presides over and directs the activities of the Relief Society in the ward. A stake Relief Society president presides and exercises authority over the function to which she has been called. The same is true for the other auxiliaries. Similarly, women called as missionaries are set apart to go forth with authority to teach the everlasting gospel, and women called to work in a temple are given authority for the sacred functions to which they have been called. All function under the direction of the priesthood leader who has been

given the priesthood keys to direct those who labor in his area of responsibility.

The Prophet Joseph Smith told the early sisters that he had something better for them than a written constitution. Being organized under priesthood authority, they were to reject worldly concepts of power and seek the power that flows down from heaven for those functions and to those individuals who are using their time and talents in the Lord's way.

In considering the Prophet's instructions to the first Relief Society, we should remember that in those earliest days in Church history more revelation was to come. Thus, when he spoke to the sisters about the appropriateness of their laying on hands to bless one another, the Prophet cautioned "that the time had not been before that these things could be in their proper order—that the Church is not now organized in its proper order, and cannot be until the Temple is completed" (minutes, 28 Apr. 1842, p. 36). During the century that followed, as temples became accessible to most members, "proper order" required that these and other sacred practices be confined within those temples.

Importance of motherhood

I will conclude by offering some counsel on the responsibilities of fathers and mothers and priesthood leaders, with special emphasis on matters of interest to the Relief Society.

President Harold B. Lee repeatedly told men that "the greatest of the Lord's work you . . . will ever do . . . will be within the walls of your own home" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1973, p. 130; or *Ensign*, July 1973, p. 98). That direction also applies to women, and it should engage the best teaching efforts of the Relief Society. We cannot overstate the supreme importance of the task our Father in

Heaven has assigned to the mothers, who are the teachers and workers and standard-setters in the homes of the Latter-day Saints. The mothers in those homes give the impressionable sons and daughters of God their earliest and most formative orientation for their mortal journey toward eternal life.

Using the priesthood to bless others

Brethren, we know that the priesthood is the power of God delegated to men to act for the blessing and salvation of all mankind. While we sometimes refer to priesthood holders as "the priesthood," we must never forget that the priesthood is not owned by or embodied in those who hold it. It is held in a sacred trust to be used for the benefit of men, women, and children alike. Elder John A. Widtsoe said, "Men have no greater claim than women upon the blessings that issue from the Priesthood and accompany its possession" (*Priesthood and Church Government* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1938], p. 83). For example, our young women should have just as many opportunities for blessings from priesthood leaders as our young men.

Unity of priesthood and auxiliaries

Some leaders at various levels of the Church have neglected to apply these basic principles. Some have failed to have the regular consultation with auxiliary leaders that is specified in our Church handbooks of instruction. President Spencer W. Kimball taught the governing principle to the priesthood leaders of the Church when he said: "Our sisters do not wish to be indulged or to be treated condescendingly; they desire to be respected and revered as our sisters and our equals. I mention all these things, my brethren, not because the doctrines or the teachings of the Church regarding women are in any doubt, but because in some

situations our behavior is of doubtful quality" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1979, p. 72; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1979, p. 49).

Priesthood leaders are directed to work in close harmony and partnership with the leaders of our auxiliaries: "As auxiliary leaders work with priesthood leaders to accomplish the mission of the Church, the Lord's earthly kingdom will prosper and individual lives will be blessed" (*Melchizedek Priesthood Leadership Handbook* [1990], p. 2).

Only by unity can we follow the way of the Lord, who said, "Be one; and if ye are not one ye are not mine" (D&C 38:27).

Marriage: a common objective

One of the great functions of Relief Society is to provide sisterhood for women, just as priesthood quorums provide brotherhood for men. But all should remember that neither sisterhood nor brotherhood is an end in itself. Each is a means of individual spiritual growth and cooperative service. The ultimate and highest expression of womanhood and manhood is in the new and everlasting covenant of marriage between a man and a woman. Only this relationship culminates in exaltation. As the Apostle Paul taught, "Neither is the man without the woman, neither the woman without the man, in the Lord" (1 Corinthians 11:11). Thus, the common objective of brotherhood in our priesthood quorums and sisterhood in our Relief Societies is to bring men and women together in the sacred marriage and family relationships that lead toward eternal life, "the greatest of all the gifts of God" (D&C 14:7).

We give thanks for the Savior, who made this great goal attainable, for His priesthood authority that administers the essential ordinances, and for the great men and women whose lives are an inspiring legacy of godly service. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

Thank you, Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Council of the Twelve, who has been our concluding speaker.

We remind the brethren of the general priesthood meeting which will convene in the Tabernacle this evening at 6:00 P.M. mountain standard time. We call your attention to the need to move your clocks ahead one hour before retiring tonight because at 2:00 the time will change to daylight saving time. We'd like to see you here tomorrow at the right hour.

The nationwide CBS Tabernacle Choir broadcast tomorrow morning will be from 9:30 to 10:00 A.M., daylight saving time. Those desiring to attend this broadcast and the Sunday morning

session which immediately follows should be in their seats no later than 9:15 A.M.

We express gratitude to the Relief Society choir from the Brigham City Utah Region. I want those in the Tabernacle to take a look at them. What a magnificent picture they are.

The choir will now sing in closing, "Abide with Me; 'Tis Eventide." Following the singing, the benediction will be offered by Elder Helvécio Martins of the Seventy.

The choir sang "Abide with Me; 'Tis Eventide."

Elder Helvécio Martins offered the benediction.

GENERAL PRIESTHOOD SESSION

The general priesthood session, the third session of the 162nd Annual General Conference, convened in the Tabernacle at 6:00 P.M. on Saturday, April 4, 1992. President Thomas S. Monson, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted.

The music for this session was provided by an Aaronic Priesthood choir from the Orem Utah Region. Stanley Zenk directed the choir, and John Longhurst was at the organ.

President Monson opened the meeting with the following remarks:

President Thomas S. Monson

Brethren, we welcome you this evening to the general priesthood session of the conference.

President Ezra Taft Benson, who is watching these proceedings in his apartment, sends his love and best wishes to all who are participating in

this session and has asked that I, Brother Monson, conduct. We are pleased that President Benson could attend the beginning session this morning. All of us felt his love.

These services are being relayed by closed-circuit and satellite transmission to holders of the priesthood gathered in the Assembly Hall, the BYU Marriott Center, and locations in many countries throughout the world.

We note that Elders David B. Haight, John K. Carmack, and Carlos Amado are seated on the stand in the Assembly Hall, and Elders F. Enzo Busche and L. Lionel Kendrick are seated on the stand in the BYU Marriott Center.

For the information of those brethren in outlying areas, we announce that at the session this afternoon, Sisters Ardeth G. Kapp, Jayne B. Malan, and Janette C. Hales were released as the General Presidency of the Young

Women; and sisters Janette C. Hales, Virginia H. Pearce, and Patricia P. Pinegar were sustained as the new Young Women General Presidency.

The singing during this session will be furnished by an Aaronic Priesthood choir from the Orem Utah Region, under the direction of Brother Stanley Zenk, with Brother John Longhurst at the organ.

We shall begin with the choir singing "As Zion's Youth in Latter Days." Following the singing, Elder F. Burton Howard of the Seventy will offer the invocation.

The choir sang "As Zion's Youth in Latter Days."

Elder F. Burton Howard offered the invocation.

President Monson

Thank you, Brother Howard. Brother Howard presides as the Area President of the Mexico Area of the Church.

The choir will now favor us with "God of Our Fathers, We Come unto Thee." Following the choir number, Elder Neal A. Maxwell of the Council of the Twelve Apostles will speak to us.

The choir sang "God of Our Fathers, We Come unto Thee."

Elder Neal A. Maxwell

"My servant Joseph"

My focus, in a few headlines, will be on the remarkable man whom the Lord repeatedly and affectionately called "my servant Joseph" (D&C 5:7). What followed Joseph Smith's prayer in the spring of 1820 irrevocably illuminated our view of God, ourselves, others, life, even the universe! A young boy in a small grove of trees began receiving answers to mankind's oldest and largest questions! But young Joseph certainly did not go into the Sacred Grove seeking the restoration of the holy priesthood and the holy endowment, the sealing power, and all the keys thereof. He did not even know of their existence! He merely wanted to know which of several churches to join. His prayer was for personal and tactical guidance. The response, however, was of global and eternal significance!

Joseph Smith's courage

Would Joseph have gone into the grove, brethren, if he had known beforehand the unceasing persecution which would soon engulf him and finally cause his martyrdom?

Courage is one of Joseph Smith's special qualities. Without it, he would have shrunk from carrying out his remarkable role. At about age seven, he had a gravely infected leg. Amputation seemed inevitable. He refused alcoholic anesthetics when his leg bones were surgically and painfully treated in a new technique. By the way, that thoughtful little boy asked his mother to leave the room so she wouldn't have to witness his suffering.

For Joseph's ailment, the best medical help available in America was surprisingly just a few miles away: Dr. Nathan Smith, founder of Dartmouth's medical school and the experienced pioneer of this advanced technique

(see Le Roy S. Wirthlin, "Joseph Smith's Boyhood Operation: An 1813 Surgical Success," *Brigham Young University Studies*, spring 1981, pp. 131-54; see also "Joseph Smith's Surgeon," *Ensign*, Mar. 1978, pp. 59-60). He led the team who saved Joseph's leg, including for the grueling march of Zion's Camp.

Joseph often displayed courage, as one beneficiary later reported: "Sickness and fright had robbed me of strength. Joseph had to decide w[h]ether to leave me to be captured by the mob or endanger himself by rendering aid. Choosing the latter course, he lifted me upon his own broad shoulders and bore me with occasional rests through the swamp and darkness. Several hours later we emerged upon the lonely road and soon reached safety. Joseph's . . . strength permitted him to [save] my life" (in Carl Arrington, "Brother Joseph," *New Era*, Dec. 1973, p. 19).

The glorious and the laborious

Joseph's courage was matched by his willingness to be tutored. The Restoration, which occurred "in process of time" (Moses 7:21), so required. After a glorious visitation, there would be laborious implementation. For instance, the bestowal of the golden plates, history's most stunning "find" in the field of religion, was followed by painstaking translation. The keys of the holy apostleship were dramatically restored, but well before the sifting march of Zion's Camp and the subsequent calling of the Twelve. Elijah's very significant visit came well before either the people or temples were prepared to enjoy the restored sealing power.

Yes, Joseph received remarkable manifestations, along with constant vexations. True, for instance, there were periodic arrivals of heavenly messengers, but these were punctuated by the periodic arrivals of earthly mobs.

While Joseph was befriended by heavenly notables, he was also be-

trayed by some of his earthly friends. Receiving keys and gifts was real, but so was the painful loss of six of the eleven children born to him and Emma. Granted, Joseph had revealed to him glimpses of far horizons—the first and third estates. But these periodic glories occurred amid Joseph's arduous daily life in the second estate.

Consecrated Joseph gave so much, yet often so little was returned. President Brigham Young lamented: "There was confidence due from his brethren to Joseph which he did not receive. In his death they learned a profitable lesson, and afterwards felt that if he could only be restored to them how obedient they would be to his counsels" (in *Journal of Discourses*, 10:222).

I recall reading years ago that, during severe apostasy in Kirtland, Joseph shook someone's hand for what seemed to be a long time. Discerningly, the Prophet then said he was glad to know that individual was his friend because he had so few of them in those days.

Seer, translator, and revelator

Joseph was a seer. He had the gift to translate ancient records (see *History of the Church*, 1:238), and a "seer is greater than a prophet" (Mosiah 8:15; see 8:13-17).

The process of translation was truly "a marvellous work and a wonder," or, as rendered in Hebrew, "a miraculous miracle" (Isaiah 29:14). Depending upon his sequence of translation, scholars estimate that Joseph in 1829 was translating at a rapid daily equivalent of from eight to thirteen of today's printed pages (see John W. Welch and Tim Rathbone, "The Translation of the Book of Mormon: Basic Historical Information" [Provo: Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, 1986], pp. 38-39). An able, professional translator recently told me he considers one page a day productive.

From Joseph the translator—untrained in theology—more printed pages of scripture have come down to us than from any other mortal, as Elder Jeffrey R. Holland has calculated!

Joseph, the revelator. He also became an articulator. President Young said the Prophet Joseph had the “happy faculty” of communicating things “often in a single sentence throwing . . . light into the gloom of [the] ages . . . in one blending flood of heavenly intelligence” (Brigham Young, in *Journal of Discourses*, 9:310).

Joseph Smith lit up life’s landscape, brethren, so that we can see “things as they really are, and . . . really will be” (Jacob 4:13). The revelations about the dispensations in salvational history tell us that Adam had the fullness of Christ’s gospel and all its ordinances (see Moses 5:58–59). Hence, Christianity did not begin with Jesus’ mortal messiahship in the meridian of time in Jerusalem! The diffusion which followed Adam naturally resulted in some similarities in various religions. Therefore, as Elder Joseph F. Smith declared, we find “relics of Christianity” which “date back . . . beyond the flood, independent of . . . the Bible” (in *Journal of Discourses*, 15:325). Latter-day Saints are therefore unsurprised but instead are enriched whenever discoveries are made which show how the Lord grants “unto all nations” to teach a portion of “his word” (Alma 29:8).

In 1834 all the priesthood in the Kirtland area met, not in a tabernacle but in a small log cabin. There, Joseph prophesied that the Church would eventually grow to fill North and South America and even the world (see Wilford Woodruff, *Millennial Star*, 19 Sept. 1892, p. 605; see also Conference Report, Apr. 1898, p. 57). Think of it, brethren—tonight we have live audiences in over three thousand separate congregations involving 162,000 men and young men! Later, videos will reach tens of thousands more in forty-

seven countries and seventeen languages!

Even so, young men listening tonight, including several of my grandsons, will aid in the further fulfillment of Joseph’s bold prophecy, for “the ends of the earth shall inquire after [Joseph’s] name” (D&C 122:1). And young men listening tonight will answer those inquiries in the years ahead and in places with strange-sounding names.

Another remarkable prophecy, given nearly thirty years before the tragedy of the American Civil War, foretold not only where it would begin, but, more importantly, that it would end “in the death and misery of many souls” (D&C 87:1). By far, that war still ranks as America’s bloodiest.

Other prophecies await. Some are grim, such as “a desolating sickness shall cover the land” (D&C 45:31). How its awful fulfillment will occur, we do not know.

When they first met, Joseph also prophesied that Brigham Young would one day preside over the Church (see *Millennial Star*, 11 July 1863, p. 439).

Brigham Young was not easily impressed by anybody, yet he said he felt like shouting “Hallelujah!” all the time that he ever knew Joseph Smith! (in *Journal of Discourses*, 3:51). And dying Brigham’s last words were, “Joseph! Joseph! Joseph!” He was about to be with his beloved Joseph once again! (in Leonard J. Arrington, *Brigham Young: American Moses* [New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1985], p. 399).

Joseph’s spiritual submissiveness

Joseph could not have accomplished what he did if he had not become consecrated and spiritually submissive. Elder Erastus Snow warned the rest of us that when we are “inclined to be stiff and refractory, . . . the Spirit of the Lord is held at a distance from us” because we are too busy grati-

fying our own wills, and thus we “interpose a barrier” between us and God (in *Journal of Discourses*, 7:352).

Near the end, in multiple meetings, Joseph transferred the keys, authority, and ordinances to the Twelve. On one such occasion, President Wilford Woodruff said the revelator’s “face was as clear as amber and he was covered with a power [I have] never seen in [an instant] in the flesh before” (in *Journal History*, 12 Mar. 1897). President Young said that those who knew Joseph could tell when “the Spirit of revelation was upon him, . . . for at such times there was a peculiar clearness and transparency in his face” (in *Journal of Discourses*, 9:89).

Even with all he revealed, however, the Prophet Joseph knew much more than he could tell. President John Taylor observed that Joseph “felt fettered and bound” (in *Journal of Discourses*, 10:148). Heber C. Kimball confirmed that Joseph sometimes felt “as though he were enclosed . . . ; there was no room for him to expand, . . . no room in the hearts of the people to receive” (in *Journal of Discourses*, 10:233).

The Prophet Joseph was a very good man. We need not suppose him “guilty of any great or malignant sins,” for such, he said, “was never in my nature” (Joseph Smith—History 1:28). Near the end of his life, he meekly said, “I never told you I was perfect; but there is no error in the revelations which I have taught” (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, sel. Joseph Fielding Smith [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1938], p. 368).

Unsurprisingly, the Prophet was closely linked with previous prophets! Just as on the Mount of Transfiguration Peter, James, and John were given priesthood keys by Elias, the Prophet Joseph likewise received priesthood keys from Elias and also from Peter, James, and John and so many others! In a December 1834 blessing, Father Smith confirmed to his son that ancient

Joseph in Egypt “looked after his posterity in the last days . . . [and] sought diligently to know . . . who should bring forth the word of the Lord [to them] and his eyes beheld thee, my son [Joseph Smith, Jr.]: [and] his heart rejoiced and his soul was satisfied” (*Patriarchal Blessings*, 1:3).

Joseph’s suffering

Concerning his personal suffering, Joseph was promised, “Thy heart shall be enlarged.” An enlarged Joseph wrote from Liberty Jail, “It seems to me that my heart will always be more tender after this than ever it was before. . . . I think I never could have felt as I now do if I had not suffered” (*The Personal Writings of Joseph Smith*, ed. Dean C. Jessee [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1984], pp. 386–87). Was Joseph not told, “All these things shall give thee experience, and shall be for thy good”? (D&C 122:7).

Revelations about the Atonement

Most significantly, through the Prophet Joseph came translations and revelations which confirmed and described, as never before, the reality of the glorious Atonement, in which, alas, so few really believe today. It is the central act of all human history! Very few words have come directly from Jesus about His specific and personal suffering during that agonizing but emancipating atonement. Almost all of these precious few words come to us through the Prophet Joseph! Jesus truly did bleed at every pore. He trembled because of pain. He suffered both body and spirit. He pled that He might not shrink, or pull back, from performing the Atonement. He finally finished His preparations unto the children of men. Meek Jesus let His will be “swallowed up in the will of the Father”! (Mosiah 15:7). Even in the midst of His astonishing, personal triumph,

Jesus, true to His premortal promise, still gave all the glory to the Father (see D&C 19:18–19; Moses 4:2).

Be men of Christ

The Prophet's life was thus one of high achievement amid deep disappointment. Brethren, how will we endure our own peaks and valleys? Will we so submit individually, or will we be "stiff and refractory"?

Joseph became fully consecrated and grew in a "spiritual crescendo." Will we do the same, brethren, by witnessing to our families, friends, and flocks—not only through our verbal testimonies but also by our developmental examples? We can do this by becoming ever more visibly the men of Christ!

Or will we be like those who were decent but who lacked the courage to declare openly for Jesus and who were afraid of losing their places in the synagogue? (see John 12:42–43). There are so many equivalent situations today, and some Church members are reluctant to risk losing their places! Each day we decide the degree of our discipleship. Each day we answer the question, "Who's on the Lord's side? Who?"

Now, my brethren, "these are [your] days" (Helaman 7:9) in the history of the Church. Mark well what kind of days they will be, days when, with special visibility, the Lord will "make bare his holy arm in the eyes of all the nations" (D&C 133:3). God will also "hasten" His work (D&C 88:73). He will also "shorten" the last days "for the elect's sake" (Matthew 24:22); hence, there will be a compression of events (see Joseph Smith—Matthew 1:20). Furthermore, "all things shall be in commotion" (D&C 88:91). Only those in the process of becoming the men and women of Christ will be able to keep their spiritual balance. Brethren, may we "walk by faith" and, if necessary, even on our knees! In the name of the Lord of the universe, even Jesus Christ, amen.

President Monson

We have heard from Elder Neal A. Maxwell of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.

Elder Carlos E. Asay, a member of the Presidency of the Seventy, will now speak to us, and he will be followed by Elder Vaughn J. Featherstone of the Seventy.

Elder Carlos E. Asay

A young man of deacon age reported:

"I feel a lot of pressure from my friends to smoke and steal and things like that. . . . My best friends are really pushing me to do it. They call me a *pansy* and a *Momma's boy* if I don't. I really don't like the idea of smoking but my good friend Steve told me in front of some of my friends, 'Kevin, you're an idiot and a chicken wrapped up in one little body'" (in John W. Santrock, *Child Development* [New York: William C. Brown, 1987], p. 408; italics added).

An eighteen-year-old priest recounted:

"On one occasion, I was persuaded to join a group on a weekend excursion. I was told that the [plans] for the day included . . . sightseeing, a lunch, and a movie. I was promised that there would be no [inappropriate activities]. All . . . knew that I was a Latter-day Saint and . . . deeply committed to the moral standards of the Church.

"Upon reaching the city, we visited a place or two of historical significance and ate lunch. Then the inevitable hap-

pened—the group turned toward a bar and a house of [prostitution]. I refused to enter these dens of iniquity, and I openly expressed my anger over the broken promises of my associates.

“As I walked away . . . , my companions taunted me by shouting, ‘When are you going to grow up?’ ‘When will you stop being a sissy and a religious fanatic?’ ‘When are you going to be a man?’” (Carlos E. Asay, *In the Lord’s Service* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1990], p. 46).

Who is a man?

It seems that everyone at some time or another is invited by peers to smoke, drink, steal, or engage in other immoral acts, all under the pretense of manhood. And when someone refuses to participate, he is often ridiculed and called names like pansy, mamma’s boy, idiot, chicken, sissy, and religious fanatic. Such names are used by peers who equate manliness with the ability to drink liquor, blow tobacco smoke out of all the facial cavities, sow one’s wild oats like some animal on the street, and break moral laws without a twinge of conscience.

We see colorful advertisements on billboards, in magazines, and on the television screen promoting cigarettes, beer, and other vices. Those who use cunning tactics to peddle their wares disregard the souls of young people and love only their money. They would have us believe that a person with a cigarette or alcoholic beverage in hand is a man, when in reality he is nothing more than a slave to a destructive substance. They would have us believe that a person who engages in illicit sex is a man, when in reality he is nothing more than an abuser of those who are “tender and chaste and delicate” (Jacob 2:7). They would have us believe that brute force, or crude behavior, uncontrolled temper, foul language, and dirty appearance make a man, when in reality these characteristics are animalistic

at best and the opposite of manhood at worst.

We who bear the priesthood must be on guard; we must not be influenced by barbarian voices in our quest to become men (see 1 Corinthians 14:8–11). We must remember that “God created man in his own image” and that man is expected to keep that image engraven upon his countenance (Genesis 1:27; see also Alma 5:14, 19).

“What is man?” asked the psalmist (Psalm 8:4). The answer: “[God] made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour” (8:5). It is, therefore, our responsibility to climb ever upward and to wear God-given crowns honorably. Young men, especially those of a “chosen generation” and “royal priesthood,” must understand that they are the spiritual offspring of God and that no one becomes in truth a man until he reverences the Father of spirits and allows inner powers to control his thoughts, words, and actions (see 1 Peter 2:9; Acts 17:28; Hebrews 12:9).

What makes a man a man?

What makes a man a man? This is a question used in a popular beer ad. The suggestion of that advertisement is that by drinking the beer the consumer becomes a man. How devious and how very stupid! Those who try to get you to drink alcoholic beverages and use drugs have total disregard for you, you who are the “temples of God.” Hence, they would have you defile your body and offend the Spirit of God that dwells within you (see 1 Corinthians 3:16–17).

What makes a man a man? Let’s turn to the Book of Mormon and Father Lehi for an answer. A short time before his death, Lehi gave this charge to his sons:

“Arise from the dust, . . . and be men” (2 Nephi 1:21; italics added).

“Awake from a deep sleep, yea, even from the sleep of hell, and shake

off the awful chains by which ye are bound" (1:13).

"Be determined in one mind and in one heart, united in all things" (1:21).

"Put on the armor of righteousness. . . . Come forth out of obscurity. . . . Rebel no more" (1:23–24).

• The challenge to "*arise from the dust*" means to overcome evil behaviors that destroy character and ruin lives. Physical appetites must be controlled.

• "*Awake from a deep sleep*, . . . even from the sleep of hell," suggests a process of learning and becoming aware of God's holy purposes. No sleep is deeper or more deadly than the sleep of ignorance.

• "*Shake off the awful chains by which ye are bound*" indicates the need to overcome bad habits, even the seemingly little habits that grow into strong "chains of hell" (see 2 Nephi 26:22; Alma 5:7).

• "*Be determined in one mind and in one heart, united in all things*" requires full commitment to righteousness and a singleness of purpose so that one's will is made compatible with the will of God.

• "*Put on the armor of righteousness*" reminds us of the need to wear the helmet of salvation, pick up the sword of truth, use the shield of faith, and accept the full protective coverings of the Lord (see Ephesians 6:11–18).

• "*Come forth out of obscurity*" instructs one to model goodness and serve as a light to others. True men are living light fountains which are pleasant to be near (Thomas Carlyle; see also D&C 103:9–10).

• "*Rebel no more*" makes it perfectly clear that ignoring or willfully breaking commandments is a wasteful effort.

A vicious lie

There is a lie—a vicious lie—circulating among the Latter-day Saints

and taking its toll among the young. And it is that a "balanced man" is one who deliberately guards against becoming too righteous. This lie would have you believe that it is possible to live successfully and happily as a "double-minded man" with one foot in Babylon and one foot in Zion (see James 1:8).

I love this story of two young men who had been schooled in a monastery. One morning as they sought adventure, they passed a cathedral. The more righteous of the two remembered that they had not prayed that morning and said, "How can [we] hope for [God's] blessing upon the day?"

The less righteous one responded, "My friend, I have prayed so much during the last two months . . . that I feel that I have [somewhat] over-prayed myself."

"How can a man have too much religion?" asked the first. "It is the one thing that availeth. A man is but a beast as he lives from day to day, eating and drinking, breathing and sleeping. *It is only when he raises himself, and concerns himself with the immortal spirit within him, that he becomes in [very] truth a man.* Bethink ye how sad a thing it would be that the blood of the Redeemer should be spilled to no purpose" (*Works of A. Conan Doyle* [New York: Cosmopolitan Book Corporation, 1988], pp. 58–59; italics added).

Can a man be too righteous? Too Christlike? Impossible! Can the so-called "balanced man" walk successfully the beam between good and evil? No. Each step is shaky, and eventually he will teeter and fall and break himself against the commandments of God.

Fleshliness never was manliness, and it never will be. A real man is one who yields to the enticings of the Holy Spirit and seeks to acquire Christlike virtues. A real man is one who allows the Spirit to direct the course and to call the cadence in his life. "Remember, to be carnally-minded is death,

and to be spiritually-minded is life eternal" (2 Nephi 9:39).

Ezra Taft Benson's example of manliness

A man of Christ stood on October 1, 1959, before a crowd of 1,500 people in a church within the shadow of the Kremlin and boldly referred to Jesus as the great Redeemer. He said in an emotion-filled voice:

"I believe very firmly in prayer. . . . It is possible to reach out and tap that Unseen Power which gives us such strength and such an anchor in time of need. . . . Be unafraid, keep His commandments, love one another, pray for peace and all will be well. . . . Truth will endure. Time is on the side of truth" (Ezra Taft Benson, *Cross Fire: The Eight Years with Eisenhower* [Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday and Co., 1962], pp. 486-87).

People wept openly on that occasion, including newsmen who had reluctantly attended the worship service. One newsman, a former marine, ranked the experience as one of the two most spiritual and memorable of his life.

There was a man in that cathedral in Russia on that special day. His name, Ezra Taft Benson—he who now presides as the President, prophet of the Church.

Joseph Smith's example of manliness

Parley P. Pratt provides us with a description of a real man in his account of his imprisonment in Richmond, Missouri, with Joseph Smith and others. On one of those awful nights in jail, Brother Pratt and his associates were exposed to the filthy language of their guards as they bragged of their deeds of rape, murder, robbery, and other crimes committed against the Mormons. When the Prophet Joseph Smith could bear it no more, he rose to his feet and spoke with a voice of thunder:

"SILENCE, ye fiends of the infernal pit. In the name of Jesus Christ I rebuke you, and command you to be still; I will not live another minute and hear such language. Cease such talk, or you or I die THIS INSTANT!" (*Autobiography of Parley P. Pratt* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1975], p. 211).

Said Elder Pratt: "I have seen the ministers of justice, clothed in magisterial robes . . . in the Courts of England; I have witnessed a Congress in solemn session . . . ; I have tried to conceive of kings . . . and of emperors assembled to decide the fate of kingdoms; but dignity and majesty have I seen but *once*, as it stood in chains, at midnight, in a dungeon in an obscure village of Missouri" (*Autobiography*, p. 211).

There was a man! Joseph Smith, the prophet of the Restoration.

The Savior's example of manliness

The Savior, the perfect model of manliness, stood before his tormentors having been scourged, beaten, spat upon, and platted with a crown of thorns. Pilate admitted, "I find no fault in him." Then he pronounced those irrefutable and piercing words: "Behold the man!" (John 19:4-5).

Jesus, our Savior, was *the* man among men, for he "increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man" (Luke 2:52); he subjected the flesh to the Spirit and yielded not to temptation (see Mosiah 15:1-8); he learned obedience by the things which he suffered (see Hebrews 5:8); he grew from grace to grace (see D&C 93:12-14); and, in the words of Shakespeare:

His life was gentle, and the elements
So mix'd in him that Nature might
stand up
And say to all the world "This was a
man!"

[*Julius Caesar*, cited in David O. McKay, *Gospel Ideals* (Salt Lake City: Improvement Era, 1953), p. 353]

Thus he, the only sinless and perfect man who ever walked this earth, is qualified to state: "What manner of men ought ye to be? Verily I say unto you, even as I am" (3 Nephi 27:27).

King David instructed his son Solomon,

"Be thou strong . . . and shew thyself a man;

"And keep the charge of the Lord thy God, to walk in his ways, to keep his statutes, and his commandments, . . . that thou mayest prosper in all that thou doest" (1 Kings 2:2-3; italics added).

I echo this charge: Be men! Be men of Christ! Be men of God! For this I pray in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

Elder Vaughn J. Featherstone

The need for mature couples

Brethren, I would talk tonight to the generation who are moving into their mature years, many of whom have served God, country, and fellowman—a strong, principled, and committed generation, which did great things but had the wisdom not to talk about them much. There is another need for us now.

The cause to which I speak is of missionary work as couples. It was of such great consequence that the Savior, in his final instructions to his disciples, charges them with it: "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. . . . I have chosen you . . . that ye should go . . . and that your fruit should remain" (John 15:13, 16).

There has never been a greater need than now for an army of mature couples to go out into every far corner of this earth and retain the fruit of the harvest. The harvest is truly great, and the laborers are few. Remember the words of Ammon:

"Our brethren, the Lamanites, were in darkness, yea, even in the darkest abyss, but behold, how many of them are brought to behold the marvelous light of God! And this is the blessing which hath been bestowed upon us, that we have been made instruments in the hands of God to bring about this great work" (Alma 26:3).

Imagine what thousands of couples could do this year, followed by hosts more in succeeding years. We could move into the fields of harvest, and we could nurture, care for, and gather them "into the garners, that they are not wasted. Yea, they shall not be beaten down by the storm at the last day" (Alma 26:5-6).

Sacrifices to serve a mission

I think we will not be tested in the way the pioneers were tested. They were called to leave all worldly possessions, homes, even family and loved ones to cross the prairies to dry and desolate, forbidding lands. They buried their babies, children, and companions on the Great Plains in shallow, unmarked graves. Physically, they suffered beyond belief, nor can tongue tell the sad, pitiful story. Out of the ashes of sacrifice of so noble a people this kingdom has emerged to become the most powerful force for good on the face of the earth today.

There is a need—not to leave homes forever, but for a time—then return and reap the rich harvest of the faithful labor. Your children and grandchildren will be blessed. The power of good will go out from Zion. "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings; that publisheth peace" (Mosiah 12:21).

Can you imagine any more Christ-like service than to secure the harvest?

Missionary couples are sent into the branches to minister and nurture. They strengthen the Church, lift up the hands that hang down, and fall in love with the Filipinos, the Africans, the Norwegians, Haitians, and Polyne-sians.

Imagine what it means to be truly needed by the Lord in a far ministry.

Prisoners of the Lord's love

There was a popular song that our generation may remember. Review the slightly adjusted lyrics with me:

Away from home tonight you'll find
me,
Too weak to break the chains that
bind me;
I need no shackles to remind me
I'm just a prisoner of love.
For one command I stand and wait
now
From one who's master of my fate
now.
I can't escape for it's too late now;
I'm just a prisoner of love.
What's the good of my caring,
Unless I am sharing his love for me?
Although there may be others,
I must be a brother, for I'm not free.
He's in my dreams, awake or
sleeping.
Upon my knees to him I'm creeping,
My very life is in his keeping.
I'm just a prisoner of love.
I am a prisoner of love.

René de Chardin said, "Someday, after we have mastered the winds, the waves, the tides, and gravity, we will harness for God the energies of love; and then, for the second time in the history of the world, man will have discovered fire."

Wonderful couples who simply love the Lord and will enlist in this

great work and accept a call will also be prisoners of love—His love.

Now is the time to serve

Yogi Berra, an oft-quoted baseball philosopher, said, "When you come to a crossroads, . . . take it." Thousands of you may have reached a crossroads.

Now is the time to accept a call or volunteer for one.

A little old lady at a rest home turned to the old man next to her and said, "I can guess your age."

"You can't," he replied.

"Yes, I can," she said. "You go take a bath, shave, brush your hair, put on a nice clean shirt and a tie, and shine your shoes, and I'll tell you."

The old man was gone for about an hour. When he returned he was neat, clean, hair brushed, shoes polished, and in his suit. She said, "Now you go stand up against the wall." He did.

He said, "Now, how old am I?"

She said, "You're eighty-nine."

He responded, "That's right, but how did you know?"

She said, "You told me yesterday."

After examining a woman's husband, a doctor said, "I don't like the looks of your husband."

"Neither do I," said the woman, "but he is good to the children."

Some of us may look a little old, but if we get all dressed up we don't look half bad.

Memories to last the eternities

You can imagine what a wonderful blessing it would be to serve in a branch in Alaska, Barbados, Haiti, Nigeria, or Manila. We need couples filled with love and a desire to serve, whose chief responsibility is to bless the harvest so that the fruit will remain. Experience alone from a mature life qualifies us to become nurturers.

Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's will never be the same again once you have celebrated them while serving a mission. Imagine a small Christmas tree with a few decorations, Christmas carols, a humble apartment, never more in love with your wife—a Christmas spirit that makes that little apartment seem as a sacred temple. You pack your white baptismal clothing and walk, hand in hand, to the chapel, where a little family waits patiently to enter God's kingdom through the waters of baptism. You see the star of wonder, not hanging over Bethlehem, but in the eyes of the humble, sweet converts. You look at your wife; she looks at you; nothing need or can be said, both of you overcome with joy.

The twelve or eighteen months will seem as a small moment, but the memories will last through the eternities.

A divine charge to share

Those of us who have partaken of the goodness of God have a divine charge to share. The Apostle Paul asked the Ephesians "to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God" (Ephesians 3:19). We should be filled with all the fulness of God.

We ask along with James: "What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? Can faith save him?" (James 2:14).

And in the last verse of the book of James, the Apostle gives us a key to our service. "Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins" (James 5:20). Should the reward be less for the nurturer, the garnerer, the carer?

"Your family shall live"

President Harold B. Lee taught the principle that only as we make ourselves totally available are we worthy disciples of Christ and obtain another promise that reaches beyond us. We worry and ache and pain over family members who have erred. The thirty-first section of the Doctrine and Covenants provides a great key in verse five:

"Therefore, thrust in your sickle with all your soul, and your sins are forgiven you, and you shall be laden with sheaves upon your back, for the laborer is worthy of his hire. Wherefore, your family shall live."

Ours has been a giving generation. Why not one more time, that our families should live?

We do not know the blessings or condescensions of God. The promise is sure: "Wherefore, your family shall live." Blessings will come to our wayward or wandering children, even those who are married and have children of their own.

It is still our duty to stand

Our generation came through a depression, World War II, Korea, and Vietnam. We live in the season of the world when good has become evil and evil, good. We have heard outcries against the things which we hold precious and dear—prayer and God. We see attempts at legalization of drugs, abortion, homosexuality, and other compromising, drifting philosophies. Some of the brightest in our generation have been swept by giant waves onto treacherous shoals. We may not have been all that we should have been as parents, but we have loved our children, this Church, and our homelands, and we have cared for people in all nations. Some of the best blood of our generation has been spilled to preserve freedom. We have sacrificed many things to provide those who would

follow better things than we had. This may well be another opportunity to reach our own by serving others.

President Joseph F. Smith said:

"After we have done all we could do for the cause of truth, and withstood the evil that men have brought upon us, . . . it is still our duty to stand. We cannot give up; we must not lie down. Great causes are not won in a single generation. To stand firm in the face of overwhelming opposition, when you have done all you can, is the courage of faith. The courage of faith is the courage of progress. Men who possess that divine quality go on; they are not permitted to stand still if they would. They are not simply the creatures of their own power and wisdom; they are instrumentalities of a higher law and a divine purpose" (*Gospel Doctrine*, 5th ed. [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1939], p. 119).

There is a holy hand behind the divine purposes of God. We can be His "instrumentalities."

Raise a title of love

Most of us do not have many years left to live. As we come to the latter years of life, we come to a mature spiritual understanding. We have these next years to do something great, important, and significant for God, our religion, our wives, and children. We ought to raise a new title, not a title of liberty, but of love—a banner that will remain long after we are gone.

What better way have we to prepare to meet our God than to serve a mission when the autumn and winter of life is upon us?

We are prisoners of love. Come, my beloved brethren. Let our generation do something great and noble; come join our ranks. Let us march by the thousands out into the vineyards to

nurture, teach, and bless the tender branches. Let us protect and bless the fruit of the harvest. Let us gather the sheaves into the garner, away from the storm, safe from the whirlwind, a holy place where the storm cannot penetrate.

A good man said: "I believe the test of a great man is humility. I do not mean by humility the doubt in one's own personal power; but really, truly great men have the curious feeling that greatness is not in them but through them and they see the divine in every other human soul and are endlessly, foolishly, incredibly merciful."

That sounds like our generation. Who knows but what God will grant for us and ours what we do for others? Come, lift your banner high and march with us into the mission field in the spirit of love and caring.

Ponder and pray together. Begin to prepare. Our generation can do something great for those who follow. Have we been "steeled" for the very purpose about which I have been speaking? Let the ranks of missionaries swell with couples from every broad reach of this earth that the fruit will remain, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Monson

We have just listened to Elders Carlos E. Asay and Vaughn J. Featherstone of the Seventy.

It's only fitting, after hearing their remarks, that the choir and congregation will now join in singing "Called to Serve," following which we shall hear from Elder L. Aldin Porter of the Seventy.

The choir and congregation sang "Called to Serve."

Elder L. Aldin Porter

Qualities of effective missionaries

Elder L. Tom Perry made reference this afternoon to additional millions and millions of people who now may hear the glorious message of the restored gospel. The Lord has, in the recent past, opened the doors of nations long denied the blessings of gospel covenants. Elder Perry reissued the Lord's clarion call for every worthy young man to serve a mission. With a deep desire to in no way detract from his clear and urgent message, I would like to ask the question, What kind of missionaries must they be?

A willing heart and mind

The Church was less than eighteen months old when the Lord encouraged the early Saints by saying: "Wherefore, be not weary in well-doing, for ye are laying the foundation of a great work. And out of small things proceedeth that which is great. Behold, the Lord requireth the heart and a willing mind" (D&C 64:33-34).

Missionaries who have willing minds are needed in the field.

Let me share with you the recorded feelings of one who had a willing mind. Elder Heber C. Kimball recorded: "The Prophet Joseph came to me . . . and . . . said, 'Brother Heber, the Spirit of the Lord has whispered to me: "Let my servant Heber go to England and proclaim my Gospel, and open the door of salvation to that nation."'

"The thought was overpowering. . . . 'O, Lord,' " wrote Elder Kimball, " 'I am a man of stammering tongue, and altogether unfit for such a work; how can I go to preach in that land, which is so famed throughout Christendom for learning, knowledge and piety;

the nursery of religion; and to a people whose intelligence is proverbial!'"

Note this: "However, all these considerations did not deter me from the path of duty; the moment I understood the will of my Heavenly Father, I felt a determination to go at all hazards, believing that He would support me by His almighty power, and endow me with every qualification that I needed" (in Orson F. Whitney, *Life of Heber C. Kimball*, 3rd ed. [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1967], pp. 103-4).

Many months passed; this man of strong determination to duty had completed his mission and was about to return to his home:

"On the morning when I left Chatburn many were in tears, thinking they should see my face no more. When I left them, my feelings were such as I cannot describe. As I walked down the street I was followed by numbers; the doors were crowded by the inmates of the houses to bid me farewell, who could only give vent to their grief in sobs. . . . While contemplating this scene I was constrained to take off my hat, for I felt as if the place was holy ground. The Spirit of the Lord rested down upon me and I was constrained to bless that whole region of country. . . . My heart was like unto theirs, and I thought my head was a fountain of tears, for I wept for several miles after I bid them adieu" (in *Life of Heber C. Kimball*, p. 187).

The Lord needs missionaries with a willing heart and mind.

Commitment

Truly effective missionaries have many talents, varied and beautiful, but one quality they all seem to have is the ability to stick with their commitments—that is, the power to *do* what

they agree to do. They tell themselves to get up in the morning, on time, and do it. They don't depend on companions, district leaders, or anyone else. They commit to the mission president that they will follow the gospel study program every morning and not run out of steam in a few days. They understand that the Lord has called them to teach and testify, baptize and build the kingdom in His name, and they are happily at their work.

From whence comes this power to make a decision and stay with it? I would suggest to you it comes, in most cases, long before they arrive in the mission field.

Clean of serious transgressions

Eighteen months ago, President Thomas S. Monson spoke at the general priesthood meeting concerning a very important message. It has been published for all of us in a pamphlet called *For the Strength of Youth*. Permit me to read a short paragraph:

"Some people knowingly break God's commandments. They plan to repent before they go on a mission or receive the sacred covenants and ordinances of the temple. Repentance for such behavior is difficult and painful and may take a long time. It is better to not commit the sin. Certain sins are of such gravity that they can put your membership in the Church and your eternal life at risk. Sexual sins are among those of such seriousness" (*For the Strength of Youth* [pamphlet, 1990], p. 17).

It is my judgment that some of our youth *do not believe* that repentance for serious transgression "is difficult and painful and may take a long time." Where has this grave misunderstanding come from?

To you young people, if any of us who are older have given you the impression that it isn't too serious to

disobey the commandments of God, forgive us. Listen carefully to the words of the Lord through a prophet, even King Benjamin:

"And now, I say unto you, my brethren, that after ye have known and have been taught all these things, if ye should transgress and go contrary to that which has been spoken, that ye do withdraw yourselves from the Spirit of the Lord, that it may have no place in you to guide you in wisdom's paths that ye may be blessed, prospered, and preserved—

"I say unto you, that the man that doeth this, the same cometh out in open rebellion against God; therefore he listeth to obey the evil spirit, and becometh an enemy to all righteousness; therefore, the Lord has no place in him, for he dwelleth not in unholy temples" (Mosiah 2:36–37).

Far better that we diligently strive to keep ourselves clean of these serious transgressions. Some have not done so, and gratefully there is a way of escape. But it "is difficult and painful and may take a long time."

Note the words of the Lord Himself as He remembers the cost of our transgressions and points us to that deliverance:

"Therefore I command you to repent—repent, lest I smite you by the rod of my mouth, and by my wrath, and by my anger, and your sufferings be sore—how sore you know not, how exquisite you know not, yea, how hard to bear you know not.

"For behold, I, God, have suffered these things for all, that they might not suffer if they would repent;

"But if they would not repent they must suffer even as I;

"Which suffering caused myself, even God, the greatest of all, to tremble because of pain, and to bleed at every pore, and to suffer both body and spirit" (D&C 19:15–18).

Worthy to be guided by the Spirit

Young men, you must live righteously for many reasons. One of them is that you must be accompanied by the Spirit of the Lord as you labor in the mission field. The association of the Spirit of the Lord is dependent upon personal righteousness. If you do not strive diligently for the assistance of the Spirit, you will find your missionary work extremely difficult and your results very disappointing.

President Benson's counsel is very clear: "Our preaching and our teaching must be by the power of the Holy Ghost. . . . We must ever remember that in this glorious work, the most essential element is the Spirit" (*The Teachings of Ezra Taft Benson* [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1988], p. 313).

Listen also to the words of the Lord as He speaks of His emissaries:

"Wherefore, I call upon the weak things of the world, those who are unlearned and despised, to thrash the nations by the power of my Spirit;

"And their arm shall be my arm, and I will be their shield and their buckler; and I will gird up their loins, and they shall fight manfully for me" (D&C 35:13-14).

Let your desire be to join this magnificent army marching arm in arm with companions to "fight manfully" for Him, accompanied by the Spirit.

Priesthood leaders, let us be careful that we do not permit young missionaries to go into the mission field with unresolved transgression. It is literally like going into battle without helmet, sword, or shield. Let us remember that it takes time to develop the power to resist the fires of temptation. It takes time to receive the sweet comfort that always comes to the heart of the truly penitent. Allow them sufficient time.

A disciple of Jesus Christ

In addition, there is a broader issue. Time will permit just a reference to it. But our success in this endeavor will have eternal consequences for more than the missionary and the convert.

Elder Boyd K. Packer has reminded us that "the safety of the Church in generations ahead rests on our success in calling missionaries. If we have concern for the future of this work, we will not rest until every able-bodied young man is made worthy and desires to receive a call to a mission" ("Principles," *Ensign*, Mar. 1985, p. 10).

The Lord is calling for worthy, willing workers to labor in His harvest fields.

My beloved young men, will you consider what it would mean to you if you could join the prophet Mormon in saying: "Behold, I am a disciple of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. I have been called of him to declare his word among his people, that they might have everlasting life" (3 Nephi 5:13).

I am a witness that the Lord Jesus Christ is the Son of God and the Savior of the world. It is my deep conviction that He has called us to teach and testify in His name before the world. And to you young brethren, my sincere prayer is that you will respond to His call with a willing mind and worthy heart, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Monson

Elder L. Aldin Porter of the Seventy has just spoken to us. All from whom we've heard this evening are real missionaries, and I hope and pray that every young man who is here tonight preparing for a mission will have an opportunity to serve under just such a president as any one of these.

President Thomas S. Monson

Truly a royal priesthood has assembled tonight. The Tabernacle on Temple Square is filled to overflowing, and the Assembly Hall is occupied, as are chapels throughout many countries in the world. In all likelihood this is the largest assemblage of priesthood holders ever to come together. Your devotion to your sacred callings is inspiring. Your desire to learn your duty is evident. The purity of your souls brings heaven closer to you and your families.

Living in difficult economic times

These are difficult economic times. Cutbacks in industry, layoffs on a substantial scale, and the resultant dislocation of families become a serious challenge. We must make certain that those for whom we share responsibilities do not go hungry or unclothed or unsheltered. When the priesthood of this Church work together as one in meeting these vexing conditions, near miracles take place.

We urge all Latter-day Saints to be prudent in their planning, to be conservative in their living, and to avoid excessive or unnecessary debt. The financial affairs of the Church are being managed in this manner, for we are aware that your tithing and other contributions have not come without sacrifice and are sacred funds.

Let us make of our homes sanctuaries of righteousness, places of prayer, and abodes of love, that we might merit the blessings that can come only from our Heavenly Father. We need His guidance in our daily lives.

Being profitable servants

In this vast throng is priesthood power and the capacity to reach out and share the glorious gospel with others. We have the hands to lift others from complacency and inactivity. We

have the hearts to serve faithfully in our priesthood callings and thereby inspire others to walk on higher ground and to avoid the swamps of sin which threaten to engulf so many. The worth of souls is indeed great in the sight of God. Ours is the precious privilege, armed with this knowledge, to make a difference in the lives of others. The words found in Ezekiel could well pertain to all of us who follow the Savior in this sacred work:

"A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you. . . .

"And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them.

"And ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; and ye shall be my people, and I will be your God" (Ezekiel 36:26-28).

How might we merit this promise? What will qualify us to receive this blessing? Is there a guide to follow? May I suggest three imperatives for our consideration? They apply to the deacon as well as the high priest. They are within our reach. A kind Heavenly Father will help us in our quest.

First: *Learn what we should learn!*

Second: *Do what we should do!*

Third: *Be what we should be!*

Let us in some detail discuss these objectives, that we might be profitable servants in the sight of our Lord.

Learn what we should learn

1. *Learn what we should learn.* The Apostle Paul placed an urgency on our efforts to learn. He said to the Philippians, "One thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 3:13-14).

And to the Hebrews he urged, "Lay aside . . . sin . . . , and let us run with patience the race . . . set before us, looking [for an example] unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith" (Hebrews 12:1-2).

Elder Stephen L. Richards spoke often to holders of the priesthood and emphasized his philosophy pertaining to it. He declared:

"The Priesthood is usually simply defined as 'the power of God delegated to man.' This definition, I think, is accurate. But for practical purposes I like to define the Priesthood in terms of service and I frequently call it 'the perfect plan of service.' I do so because it seems to me that it is only through the utilization of the divine power conferred on men that they may ever hope to realize the full import and vitality of this endowment. It is an instrument of service . . . and the man who fails to use it is apt to lose it, for we are plainly told by revelation that he who neglects it 'shall not be counted worthy to stand.'"

"The Priesthood is not static and a man's ordination . . . is not a static investiture. There may be some men, however, who so regard it, for they seem to be so smug and content with their ordinations.

"I can well imagine such a man going into the presence of the great Eternal Judge and saying in substance, 'While I was on earth I was a High Priest. I come now to claim the reward of a High Priest.' I think it is not difficult to suppose what may be his answer. He will likely be met with such questions as these, 'What did you do when you were a High Priest? How did you use this great power which you held? Whom did you bless with it?' Upon his reply to such interrogatories as these will his reward be predicated."¹

The First Presidency, comprised of Joseph F. Smith, Anthon H. Lund, and Charles W. Penrose, in February 1914 declared:

"Priesthood is not given for the honor or aggrandizement of man, but for the ministry of service among those for whom the bearers of that sacred commission are called to labor. . . .

"The God-given titles of honor, and of more than human distinction, associated with the several offices in and orders of the Holy Priesthood, are not to be used nor considered as are the titles originated by man; they are not for adornment nor are they expressive of mastership, but rather of appointment to humble service in the work of the one Master whom we profess to serve."²

President Harold B. Lee, one of the great teachers of the Church, put his counsel in easy-to-understand terms: "When one becomes a holder of the priesthood, he becomes an agent of the Lord. He should think of his calling as though he were on the Lord's errand."³

Now some of you may be shy by nature or consider yourselves inadequate to respond affirmatively to a calling. Remember that this work is not yours and mine alone. It is the Lord's work, and when we are on the Lord's errand, we are entitled to the Lord's help. Remember that the Lord will shape the back to bear the burden placed upon it.

Priesthood outings to Clarkston

While the formal classroom may be intimidating at times, some of the most effective teaching takes place other than in the chapel or the classroom. Well do I remember that about this season, some years ago, members holding the Aaronic Priesthood would eagerly look forward to an annual outing commemorating the restoration of the Aaronic Priesthood. By the busload the young men of our stake journeyed ninety miles north to the Clarkston Cemetery, where we viewed the grave

of Martin Harris, one of the three witnesses of the Book of Mormon. While we surrounded the beautiful granite shaft which marks his grave, Elder Glen L. Rudd, then a high counselor, presented the background of the life of Martin Harris, read from the Book of Mormon his testimony, and then bore his own witness to the truth. The young men listened with rapt attention, touched the granite marker, and pondered the words they had heard and the feelings they had felt.

At a park in Logan, lunch was enjoyed. The group of young men then lay down on the lawn at the Logan Temple and gazed upward at its lofty spires. Beautiful white clouds hurried by the spires, moved along by a gentle breeze. The purpose of temples was taught. Covenants and promises became much more than words. The desire to be worthy to enter those temple doors entered those youthful hearts. Heaven was very close that day. Learning what we should learn was assured.

Do what we should do

2. *Do what we should do.* In a revelation on priesthood, given through Joseph Smith the Prophet, recorded as the 107th section of the Doctrine and Covenants, "learning" moves to "doing" as we read, "Wherefore, now let every man learn his duty, and to act in the office in which he is appointed, in all diligence" (D&C 107:99).

Each priesthood holder attending this session tonight has a calling to serve, to put forth his best efforts in the work assigned to him. No assignment is menial in the work of the Lord, for each has eternal consequences. President John Taylor warned us: "If you do not magnify your callings, God will hold you responsible for those whom you might have saved had you done your duty."⁴ And who of us can afford to be responsible for the delay of eternal life of a human soul? If great joy is

the reward of saving one soul, then how terrible must be the remorse of those whose timid efforts have allowed a child of God to go unwarned or unaided so that he has to wait till a dependable servant of God comes along.

The old adage is ever true: "Do your duty, that is best; leave unto the Lord the rest."

Most service given by priesthood holders is accomplished quietly and without fanfare. A friendly smile, a warm handclasp, a sincere testimony of truth can literally lift lives, change human nature, and save precious souls.

The Fussesks' mission to Poland

An example of such service was the missionary experience of Juliusz and Dorothy Fussek, who were called to fill a two-year mission in Poland. Brother Fussek was born in Poland. He spoke the language. He loved the people. Sister Fussek was English and knew little of Poland and its people.

Trusting in the Lord, they embarked on their assignment. The living conditions were primitive, the work lonely, their task immense. A mission had not at that time been established in Poland. The assignment given the Fussesks was to prepare the way that a mission could be established, that other missionaries be called to serve, people taught, converts baptized, branches established, and chapels erected.

Did Elder and Sister Fussek despair because of the enormity of their assignment? Not for a moment. They knew their calling was from God, they prayed for His divine help, and they devoted themselves wholeheartedly to their work. They remained in Poland not two years, but five years. All of the foregoing objectives were realized.

Elders Russell M. Nelson, Hans B. Ringger, and I, accompanied by Elder

Fussek, met with Minister Adam Wopatka of the Polish government and heard him say, "Your church is welcome here. You may build your buildings, you may send your missionaries. You are welcome in Poland. This man," pointing to Juliusz Fussek, "has served your church well. You can be grateful for his example and his work."

Like the Fussesks, let us do what we should do in the work of the Lord. Then we can, with Juliusz and Dorothy Fussek, echo the psalm: "My help cometh from the Lord, which made heaven and earth. . . . He that keepeth thee will not slumber. Behold, he that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep" (Psalm 121:2-4).

Be what we should be

3. *Be what we should be.* Paul counseled his beloved friend and associate Timothy, "Be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity" (1 Timothy 4:12).

President Ezra Taft Benson has urged us to pray over our assignments and to seek divine help that we might be successful. Further, he has followed this counsel himself in all of his undertakings. Prayer is a hallmark of the leadership of Ezra Taft Benson. "The recognition of a power higher than man himself does not in any sense debase him. He must seek, believe in, pray and hope that he will find. No such sincere, prayerful effort will go unanswered: that is the very constitution of the philosophy of faith. Divine favor will attend those who humbly seek it."

From the Book of Mormon comes counsel that says it all. The Lord speaks: "Therefore, what manner of men ought ye to be? Verily I say unto you, even as I am" (3 Nephi 27:27).

And what manner of man was He? What example did He set in His service? From John, chapter 10, we learn:

"I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.

"But he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth: and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep.

"The hireling fleeth, because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep.

"I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine.

"As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep" (John 10:11-15).

Learn what we should learn. Do what we should do. Be what we should be. By so doing, the blessings of heaven will attend. We will know that we do not serve alone. He who notes the sparrow's fall will, in His own way, acknowledge our service.

Slides of the Berndt family

Let me share with you, brethren, a touching experience that illustrates this assurance.

Brother Edwin Q. Cannon, Jr., was a missionary to Germany in 1938, where he loved the people and served faithfully. At the conclusion of his mission, he returned home to Salt Lake City. He married and commenced his own business.

Forty years passed by. One day Brother Cannon came to my office and said he had been pruning his missionary slides. Among those slides he had kept since his mission were several which he could not specifically identify. Every time he had planned to discard those few slides, he had been impressed to keep them, although he was at a loss as to why. They were photographs taken by Brother Cannon during his mission when he served in Stettin, Germany, and were of a family—a mother, a father, a small girl, a

small boy. Brother Cannon knew their surname was Berndt but could remember nothing more about them. He indicated that he understood there was a Berndt who was a Regional Representative in Germany, and he thought, although the possibility was remote, that this Berndt might have some connection with the Berndts who had lived in Stettin and who were depicted in the photographs. Before disposing of the slides, he thought he would check with me.

I told Brother Cannon I was leaving shortly for Berlin, where I anticipated that I would see Dieter Berndt, the Regional Representative, and that I would show the slides to him to see if there were any relationship and if he wanted them. There was a possibility I would also see Brother Berndt's sister, who was married to Dietmar Matern, a stake president in Hamburg.

The Lord didn't even let me get to Berlin before His purposes were accomplished. I was in Zurich, Switzerland, boarding the flight to Berlin, when who should also board the plane but Dieter Berndt. He sat next to me, and I told him I had some old slides of people named Berndt from Stettin. I handed them to him and asked if he could identify those shown in the photographs. As he looked at them carefully he began to weep. He said, "Our family lived in Stettin during the war. My father was killed when an Allied bomb struck the plant where he worked. Not long afterward, the Russians invaded Poland and the area of Stettin. My mother took my sister and me and fled from the advancing enemy. Everything had to be left behind, including any photographs we had. Brother Monson, I am the little boy pictured in these slides, and my sister is the little girl. The man and the woman are our dear parents. Until today, I have had no photographs of our childhood in Stettin or of my father."

Wiping away my own tears, I told Brother Berndt the slides were his. He placed them carefully and lovingly in his briefcase.

At the next general conference, when Dieter Berndt, Regional Representative, visited Salt Lake City, he paid a visit to Brother and Sister Edwin Cannon, Jr., that he might express in person his own gratitude for the inspiration that came to Brother Cannon to retain these precious slides and that he followed that inspiration in keeping them for forty years.

William Cowper penned the lines:

God moves in a mysterious way
His wonders to perform;
He plants his footsteps in the sea
And rides upon the storm. . . .
Judge not the Lord by feeble sense,
But trust him for his grace;
Behind a frowning providence
He hides a smiling face.
[Hymns (1948), no. 48]

I leave with you my testimony that this work in which we are engaged is true. The Lord is at the helm. May we ever follow Him in my sincere prayer, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

NOTES

1. In Conference Report, Apr. 1937, pp. 46-47.
2. In James R. Clark, comp., *Messages of the First Presidency of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 6 vols., (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1965-75), 4:304.
3. *Stand Ye in Holy Places* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1974), p. 255.
4. In *Journal of Discourses*, 20:23.

President Gordon B. Hinckley, First Counselor in the First Presidency, will be our concluding speaker.

Before hearing his remarks, we remind you that the CBS Tabernacle Choir broadcast will be from 9:30 to 10:00 tomorrow morning. Those desir-

ing to attend this broadcast and the Sunday morning session which follows must be in their seats before 9:15 A.M.

Now brethren, because daylight saving time begins at 2:00 A.M. tomorrow, we encourage you to move your clocks ahead one hour before you retire this evening. We want everyone on time tomorrow.

As you leave this priesthood meeting tonight, we ask you to obey traffic

rules, to use caution, and to be courteous in driving.

We express our gratitude to the Aaronic Priesthood choir from the Orem Utah Region for the inspiring music this evening. What a cadre of missionaries they comprise.

Following President Hinckley's address, the choir will conclude by singing "Thy Holy Word." The benediction will be offered by Elder J Ballard Washburn of the Seventy.

President Gordon B. Hinckley

Believe in the prophets

My beloved brethren, this has been an inspirational meeting. We have heard much which, if applied, will bless our lives. I seek the direction of the Holy Spirit as I add my testimony. I desire to speak in the spirit of testimony. In so doing, I intend to speak rather informally of some of my own experiences and observations concerning the leaders of this Church. I have chosen a text from the second book of Chronicles, the twentieth chapter.

I take you back to the time when Jehoshaphat, the son of Asa, was king of Judah and Jerusalem.

It was a season of terrible anxiety. The Ammonites and the Moabites had declared war on the people of Judah. Those of Judah were vastly outnumbered, and their cause appeared hopeless.

Jehoshaphat gathered his people together to plead with the Lord for help. He cried out in prayer:

"O our God, . . . we have no might against this great company that cometh against us; neither know we what to do: but our eyes are upon thee" (2 Chronicles 20:12).

Then Jahaziel, the Levite prophet, said to Jehoshaphat:

"Thus saith the Lord unto you, Be not afraid nor dismayed by reason of

this great multitude; for the battle is not yours, but God's. . . .

"Ye shall not need to fight in this battle: set yourselves, stand ye still, and see the salvation of the Lord with you . . . : fear not, nor be dismayed" (20:15, 17).

Then the king, relying upon the words of the prophet, said to the people, "Hear me, O Judah, and ye inhabitants of Jerusalem; *Believe in the Lord your God, so shall ye be established; believe his prophets, so shall ye prosper*" (20:20; italics added).

These are the words of my text. I repeat them: "Believe in the Lord your God, so shall ye be established; believe his prophets, so shall ye prosper."

The Prophet Joseph Smith

We sing a hymn in this Church that is peculiar to us: "We thank thee, O God, for a prophet to guide us in these latter days" (*Hymns*, no. 19).

I have not spoken face to face with all of the prophets of this dispensation. I was not acquainted with the Prophet Joseph Smith, nor did I ever hear him speak. My grandfather, who as a young man lived in Nauvoo, did hear him and testified of his divine calling as the great prophet of this dispensation. But I feel I have come to know the Prophet Joseph Smith.

I have read and believed his testimony of his great first vision in which he conversed with the Father and the Son. I have pondered the wonder of that as I have stood in the grove where he prayed, and in that environment, by the power of the Spirit, I have received a witness that it happened as he said it happened.

I have read the Book of Mormon, which he translated by the gift and power of God. By the power of the Holy Ghost I have received a testimony and a witness of the divine origin of this sacred record. Joseph Smith did not write it of his own capacity.

I have seen with my own eyes the power of the priesthood which came to him under the hands of those who held it anciently. I have studied his life and measured his words. I have pondered the circumstances of his death, and I have come to know him—at least in some degree, at least enough that I can stand before you and testify that he was a prophet called and ordained to stand as God's instrument in this great work of restoration.

Other prophets of this dispensation

I never saw Brigham Young, John Taylor, Wilford Woodruff, or Lorenzo Snow. But I know they were men of God because I have studied their lives and read their words and received in my heart a witness of their calling as prophets of God.

I remember as a small boy seeing President Joseph F. Smith. I do not recall the details, but I have in my mind a picture of him as a man with a flowing beard whose voice was not strong. I have since read much of what he taught. And I know that he spoke as a prophet of the living God.

I have known in a personal way Presidents Heber J. Grant, George Albert Smith, David O. McKay, Joseph Fielding Smith, Harold B. Lee, Spencer W. Kimball, and Ezra Taft

Benson. I have done work for each. I have served under each. I have known them, I have heard them pray, and I can testify that each has been an unusual and remarkable man, that each has been called of God after a long period of experience and tempering, of training and discipline to stand as an instrument of the Almighty in speaking to the people for their blessing and direction.

President Heber J. Grant

I heard President Grant on several occasions before I met him. As teenage boys, my brother and I came to this Tabernacle at conference when there was room for anybody who wished to come. As boys are wont to do, we sat in the balcony at the very far end of the building. To me it was always impressive when this tall man stood to speak. Some kind of electricity passed through my boyish frame. His voice rang out in testimony of the Book of Mormon. When he said it was true, I knew it was true. He spoke with great power on the Word of Wisdom and, without hesitation, promised blessings to the people if they would observe it. I have often thought of the human misery, the pain that has resulted from the smoking of cigarettes, the poverty that has resulted from the drinking of liquor which might have been avoided had his prophetic counsel been followed.

He spoke on the law of tithing. I can still hear his great testimony of this principle. He spoke of the fast offering and said, as I remember him from my boyhood days, that if all the world would observe this simple principle, which came as a revelation from God, the needs of the poor over the earth would be met without taxing the people for welfare purposes.

He warned against the enslavement of personal debt. The world at that time was on a reckless pursuit of

riches. Then came Black Thursday of November 1929. I was nineteen years of age, a student at the university. I saw the economy crumble. I saw men whom I knew lose everything as their creditors moved against them. I saw much of the trauma and the stress of the times. I thought then, and I have thought since, how so many people might have been saved pain and misery, suffering, embarrassment, and trouble had they listened to the counsel of a prophet concerning personal debt.

President George Albert Smith

George Albert Smith succeeded Heber J. Grant as President and prophet. The terrible Second World War came to a close during his presidency. Our people, as well as others in Europe, were starving in the aftermath of that war. President Smith went to see the president of the United States, Harry Truman. He asked for transportation to get foodstuffs and clothing to those in need. President Truman asked President Smith where he would get these resources. President Smith replied that the Church operated production projects under a welfare program and that women of the Relief Society had saved wheat. The shelves of our storehouses were well stocked, and our granaries were filled. This had come of the prophetic foresight of Church leaders.

The government promised transportation, and Elder Ezra Taft Benson of the Council of the Twelve was sent to Europe to look after the distribution of the commodities which were shipped to Germany.

I was among those who worked nights at Welfare Square here in Salt Lake City loading commodities onto rail cars which moved the food to the port from which it was shipped across the sea. During the time of the Swiss Temple dedication, when many of the Saints of Germany came to the temple,

I heard some of them, with tears running down their cheeks, speak with appreciation for that food which had saved their lives.

President Smith used to talk of a line which we must not cross. One side was the Lord's, the other the adversary's. President Smith would say to us, "Stay on the Lord's side of the line." He frequently reminded us: "We are all our Father's children. We must love people into doing what's right." He was the epitome of love.

President David O. McKay

David O. McKay succeeded George Albert Smith. He was a robust and handsome man, commanding in his appearance, yet withal possessed of a smile that was beautiful and reassuring. He looked like a prophet, and he spoke as a prophet.

I recall the time when a world-renowned journalist came to interview him. This was a man who had met the great of the earth. He was tough and unsparing in his questioning and probing. When he came out of the President's office, he said to President McKay's secretary, "Today I have seen and talked with a prophet."

Great were his teachings; persuasive were his pleas for personal righteousness and the strengthening of our families. His great statement on the home has become as a motto with us: No success in life can compensate for failure in the home. Those who followed his counsel have been blessed. Those who scorned it have paid a tragic price.

President Joseph Fielding Smith

Joseph Fielding Smith next became President of the Church and the prophet of the Lord. Some thought he spoke harshly in the tone of a prophet of the Old Testament. He did speak

straightforwardly and without equivocation. Such is the mission of a prophet. But it was my experience that he was a man of great kindness who grieved over the unwillingness of so many to follow the commandments of the Lord.

He used three great words that I can never forget: "true and faithful." In his public addresses, in his private conversations, in his prayers to the Lord he pleaded that we might be true and faithful. Those who followed his counsel have tasted the sweet fruit of obedience. Those who have scoffed have known something of the bitterness that comes of a denial of truth.

President Harold B. Lee

Harold B. Lee came next. This was a man I loved. During the short tenure of his presidency, I traveled in Europe with him on two different occasions. Those were wonderful days when we talked together. I was his junior companion on those journeys, and he spoke out of his great heart about many things. He warned against the neglect of families. He told us that the greatest work any of us would ever do would be within the walls of our own homes. He told us to survey large fields and cultivate small ones. In so saying, he wanted us to get the great, broad picture of this work and then with faithfulness take care of our own individual responsibility in it.

He had come out of humble circumstances and carried in his heart a great sensitivity for the poor. He was the first managing director of the welfare program as it was established in 1936, and he taught its principles across the Church. He extended to me a call to serve as a stake president and set me apart in that office. I still remember some of the things he said in that blessing. Said he: "Be sensitive to the promptings of the Spirit. Be slow to censure and quick to encourage."

I commend that counsel to each of you. It came from a living prophet of God.

President Spencer W. Kimball

Great was my love also for his successor, President Spencer W. Kimball. This kindly man, short of stature, was so diligent, so energetic, so determined to overcome any handicap that even the quality of his injured voice actually became an asset. When he stood to speak, we all listened. Who can ever forget his great, moving statement:

"So much depends upon our willingness to make up our minds, collectively and individually, that present levels of performance are not acceptable [unto us] or to the Lord. In saying that, I am not calling for flashy, temporary differences in our performance levels, but a quiet resolve . . . to do a better job, to lengthen our stride" (*The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball*, ed. Edward L. Kimball [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1982], p. 174).

That call to lengthen our stride went across the entire Church. Many took it to heart and worked with greater enthusiasm and dedication. As they did so, they were blessed in their lives. How great is my debt, and is yours also, to this kindly man of gentle ways and prophetic leadership.

President Ezra Taft Benson

President Ezra Taft Benson was ordained and set apart to his high and holy calling immediately following the death of President Kimball. Could anyone doubt his qualifications for this responsibility? Over the years in public and Church affairs, he had moved with ease among the great of the earth. Since the days of his childhood, he has carried in his heart a deep and unmovable conviction concerning the divinity of this work. He has exercised the authority of the apostleship in his minis-

try among the nations. He has spoken prophetically and wonderfully on many things, but his most oft-repeated message to the people of the Church has been, "Read the Book of Mormon."

Why? Because he knows that the reading of this sacred testament will bring us closer to God and that there is no greater need among us than this.

Could there be a call from a prophet more timely than this call? One need only look at the filth and rot that are sweeping over the world in the form of pornographic literature, pornographic movies, pornographic videocassettes, pornographic television to see the need for a great and powerful and moving counterforce for righteousness.

Importance of following the prophets

I go back to the words of Jehoshaphat: "Believe in the Lord your God, so shall ye be established; believe his prophets, so shall ye prosper" (2 Chronicles 20:20).

There are many little things that test our willingness to accept the word of the prophets. Jesus said, "How often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!" (Matthew 23:37).

So it has been through the history of mankind, and so it is today. In our own communities, even here in Utah, we have experienced some of this. President Grant carried to his grave a deep sense of sorrow that, contrary to his counsel, the people of Utah cast the final vote, in 1934, that repealed the Eighteenth Amendment to the Constitution.

I am grateful to say that we had a different experience some years ago when we joined with other citizens in a campaign to control the distribution of liquor. There is no question in my mind that great benefits have come as a result of the overwhelming response

to direction from our prophet. There was a similar result when it was proposed that an MX Missile site be located here. Under the leadership of President Kimball, we took a position on this matter. I believe that not only were we of this part of the country blessed because of that position, but also the entire nation, and perhaps the world.

Now again, as always, we are faced with public moral issues, this time concerning lotteries, pari-mutuel betting, and other forms of gambling. The Presidents of the Church have spoken clearly and unequivocally on these matters.

These are little things, but they are important things. They bring to mind the great contest between the prophet Elijah and the priests of Baal. Said Elijah on that occasion: "How long halt ye between two opinions? if the Lord be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him" (1 Kings 18:21).

Be true and faithful

Now in conclusion, may I repeat that I have worked with seven Presidents of this Church. I have recognized that all have been human. But I have never been concerned over this. They may have had some weaknesses. But this has never troubled me. I know that the God of heaven has used mortal men throughout history to accomplish His divine purposes. They were the very best available to Him, and they were wonderful.

These men whom I have known and with whom I have worked have been totally unselfish in their zeal to build the kingdom of God and bring happiness into the lives of the people. They have been unsparing in giving of themselves to the great work for which each had responsibility in his particular season.

I speak to the priesthood of this Church, wherever you may be gathered

across the world, in gratitude for a prophet to guide us in these latter days. I plead for loyalty to him whom the Lord has called and anointed. I plead for steadfastness in upholding him and giving attention to his teachings. I have said on another occasion at this pulpit that if we have a prophet, we have everything. If we do not have a prophet, we have nothing. We do have a prophet. We have had prophets since the founding of this Church. We shall never be without a prophet if we live worthy of a prophet.

The Lord is watching over this work. This is His kingdom. We are not as sheep without a shepherd. We are not as an army without a leader.

I go back to those three words so frequently spoken by President Joseph

Fielding Smith: "true and faithful." God help us to be true and faithful, to hear with listening ears that counsel which has come from Him who is our Father and our God, and from Him who is our Savior and our Redeemer as they have spoken to us through those whom we sustain as prophets. I bear witness and testimony of these things and, my brethren, leave my blessing and love with you in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The choir sang "Thy Holy Word." Elder J Ballard Washburn offered the benediction.

SUNDAY MORNING SESSION

The fourth session of the 162nd Annual General Conference commenced at 10:00 A.M. on Sunday, April 5, 1992. President Ezra Taft Benson presided, and President Gordon B. Hinckley, First Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted this session.

The Tabernacle Choir provided the music, with Jerold Ottley and Donald Ripplinger conducting and Richard Elliott at the organ.

To begin the session, the choir sang "For the Strength of the Hills" without announcement.

President Hinckley opened the meeting with the following remarks:

President Gordon B. Hinckley

We welcome you this beautiful spring Sabbath morning from the Tabernacle in Salt Lake City, Utah, to the fourth general session of the 162nd annual conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

We are honored this morning with the presence of President Ezra Taft

Benson, who presides at this conference.

We acknowledge the large audience assembled in the Tabernacle and in the overflow gathering in the nearby Assembly Hall, where Elders Dallin H. Oaks, Benjamin B. Banks, and Rulon G. Craven are seated on the stand.

We extend our greetings to those of you who are participating by radio, television, cable, or satellite transmission. We are grateful to the owners and operators of the stations who are broadcasting this conference.

We note that the conference is being relayed for the first time to satellite downlink locations in Huddersfield, England; Versailles, France; and Frankfurt, Germany.

We acknowledge the presence this morning of government, education, and civic leaders, and members of the Church who have assembled from far and near to worship together.

The Tabernacle Choir, under the direction of Brothers Jerold Ottley and Donald Ripplinger, with Brother

Richard Elliott at the organ, will provide the music for this session. The choir opened these services by singing "For the Strength of the Hills." They will now sing "On This Day of Joy and Gladness," following which Elder Marlin K. Jensen of the Seventy will offer the invocation.

The choir sang "On This Day of Joy and Gladness."

Elder Marlin K. Jensen offered the invocation.

President Hinckley

President Thomas S. Monson, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, will be our first speaker this morning.

President Thomas S. Monson

On this Sabbath day our thoughts turn to Him who atoned for our sins, who showed us the way to live and how to pray, and who demonstrated by His own actions the blessings of service. Born in a stable, cradled in a manger, this Son of God, even Jesus Christ the Lord, yet beckons to each of us to follow Him.

A leper gives thanks

In the book of Luke, chapter 17, we read:

"And it came to pass, as he went to Jerusalem, that he passed through the midst of Samaria and Galilee.

"And as he entered into a certain village, there met him ten men that were lepers, which stood afar off:

"And they lifted up their voices, and said, Jesus, Master, have mercy on us.

"And when he saw them, he said unto them, Go shew yourselves unto the priests. And it came to pass, that, as they went, they were cleansed.

"And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God,

"And fell down on his face at his feet, giving him thanks: and he was a Samaritan.

"And Jesus answering said, Were there not ten cleansed? but where are the nine?

"There are not found that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger.

"And he said unto him, Arise, go thy way: thy faith hath made thee whole" (Luke 17:11-19).

Through divine intervention, those who were lepers were spared from a cruel, lingering death and given a new lease on life. The expressed gratitude by one merited the Master's blessing, the ingratitude shown by the nine, His disappointment.

"Accentuate the positive"

Like the leprosy of yesteryear are the plagues of today. They linger; they debilitate; they destroy. They are to be found everywhere. Their pervasiveness knows no boundaries. We know them as selfishness, greed, indulgence, cruelty, and crime, to identify but a few. Surfeited with their poison, we tend to criticize, to complain, to blame, and, slowly but surely, to abandon the positives and adopt the negatives of life.

A popular refrain from the 1940s captured the thought:

Accentuate the positive;
Eliminate the negative.
Latch on to the affirmative;
Don't mess with Mr. In-between.¹

Good advice then. Good advice now.

This is a wonderful time to be living here on earth. Our opportunities are limitless. While there are some things wrong in the world today, there are many things right, such as teachers who teach, ministers who minister, marriages that make it, parents who sacrifice, and friends who help.

We can lift ourselves, and others as well, when we refuse to remain in the realm of negative thought and cultivate within our hearts an attitude of gratitude. If ingratitude be numbered among the serious sins, then gratitude takes its place among the noblest of virtues.

A favorite hymn always lifts our spirits, kindles our faith, and inspires our thoughts:

When upon life's billows you are
tempest tossed,
When you are discouraged, thinking
all is lost,
Count your many blessings; name
them one by one,
And it will surprise you what the
Lord has done. . . .
So amid the conflict, whether great
or small,
Do not be discouraged; God is over
all.
Count your many blessings; angels
will attend,
Help and comfort give you to your
journey's end.
[Hymns, no. 241]

Well could we reflect upon our lives as individuals. We will soon discover much to prompt our personal gratitude.

Gratitude for our mothers

First, there is gratitude for our mothers.

Mother, who willingly made that personal journey into the valley of the shadow of death to take us by the hand and introduce us to birth—even to mortal life—deserves our undying

gratitude. One writer summed up our love for mother when he declared, "God could not be everywhere, and so He gave us mothers."

While on the cruel cross of Calvary, suffering intense pain and anguish, Jesus "saw his mother, and the disciple standing by, whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, Woman, behold thy son! Then saith he to the disciple, Behold thy mother!" (John 19:26-27). What a divine example of gratitude and love!

My own mother may not have read to me from the scriptures; rather, she taught me by her life and actions what the "Good Book" contains. Care for the poor, the sick, the needy were everyday dramas never to be forgotten.

Gratitude for our fathers

Second, let us reflect gratitude for our fathers.

Father, like Mother, is ever willing to sacrifice his own comfort for that of his children. Daily he toils to provide the necessities of life, never complaining, ever concerned for the well-being of his family. This love for children, this desire to see them well and happy, is a constant in a time of change.

On occasion I have observed parents shopping to clothe a son about to enter missionary service. The new suits are fitted, the new shoes are laced, and shirts, socks, and ties are bought in quantity. I met one father who said to me, "Brother Monson, I want you to meet my son." Pride popped his buttons; the cost of the clothing emptied his wallet; love filled his heart. Tears filled my eyes when I noticed that *his* suit was old, *his* shoes well worn; but he felt no deprivation. The glow on his face was a memory to cherish.

As I reflect on my own father, I remember he yielded his minuscule discretionary time to caring for a crippled uncle, aged aunts, and his family. He served in the ward Sunday

School presidency, always preferring to work with the children. He, like the Master, loved children. I never heard from his lips one word of criticism of another. He personified in his life the work ethic. I join you in an expression of gratitude for our fathers.

Gratitude for our teachers

Third, all of us remember with gratitude our *teachers*.

The teacher not only shapes the expectations and ambitions of pupils; the teacher also influences their attitudes toward their future and themselves. If the teacher loves the students and has high expectations of them, their self-confidence will grow, their capabilities will develop, and their future will be assured. A citation to such a teacher could well read: "She created in her room an atmosphere where warmth and acceptance weave their magic spell; where growth and learning, the soaring of the imagination, and the spirit of the young are assured."

May I express public gratitude for three of my own teachers. I thank G. Homer Durham, my history professor. He taught the truth, "The past is behind; learn from it." He loved his subject; he loved his students. The love in his classroom opened the windows of my mind, that learning might enter.

O. Preston Robinson, my professor of marketing, instilled in his students that the future is ahead and we are to prepare for it. When he entered the classroom, his presence was like a welcome breath of fresh air. He instilled a spirit of "You can do it." His life reflected his teaching—that of friendly persuasion. He taught truth. He inspired effort. He prompted love.

Then there was a Sunday School teacher—never to be forgotten, ever to be remembered. We met for the first time on a Sunday morning. She accompanied the Sunday School president into the classroom and was presented to us as a teacher who actually re-

quested the opportunity to teach us. We learned that she had been a missionary and loved young people. Her name was Lucy Gertsch. She was beautiful, soft-spoken, and interested in us. She asked each class member to introduce himself or herself, and then she asked questions that gave her an understanding and an insight into the background of each boy, each girl. She told us of her childhood in Midway, Utah; and as she described that beautiful valley, she made its beauty live, and we desired to visit the green fields she loved so much. She never raised her voice. Somehow rudeness and boisterousness were incompatible with the beauty of her lessons. She taught us that the present is here and that we must live in it. She made the scriptures actually come to life. We became personally acquainted with Samuel, David, Jacob, Nephi, and the Lord Jesus Christ. Our gospel scholarship grew. Our deportment improved. Our love for Lucy Gertsch knew no bounds.

We undertook a project to save nickels and dimes for what was to be a gigantic party. Sister Gertsch kept a careful record of our progress. As boys and girls with typical appetites, we converted in our minds the monetary totals to cakes, cookies, pies, and ice cream. This was to be a glorious occasion—the biggest party ever. Never before had any of our teachers even suggested a social event like this one was going to be.

The summer months faded into autumn; autumn turned to winter. Our party goal had been achieved. The class had grown. A good spirit prevailed.

None of us will forget that gray morning in January when our beloved teacher announced to us that the mother of one of our classmates had passed away. We thought of our own mothers and how much they meant to us. We felt sorrow for Billy Devenport in his great loss.

The lesson that Sunday was from the book of Acts, chapter twenty, verse thirty-five: "Remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive." At the conclusion of the presentation of a well-prepared lesson, Lucy Gertsch commented on the economic situation of Billy's family. These were depression times; money was scarce. With a twinkle in her eyes, she asked, "How would you like to follow this teaching of the Lord? How would you feel about taking your party fund and, as a class, giving it to the Devenports as an expression of our love?" The decision was unanimous. We counted very carefully each penny and placed the total sum in a large envelope.

Ever shall I remember the tiny band walking those three city blocks, entering Billy's home, greeting him, his brother, sisters, and father. Noticeably absent was his mother. Always I shall treasure the tears which glistened in the eyes of each one present as the white envelope containing our precious party fund passed from the delicate hand of our teacher to the needy hand of a grief-stricken father. We fairly skipped our way back to the chapel. Our hearts were lighter than they had ever been, our joy more full, our understanding more profound. This simple act of kindness welded us together as one. We learned through our own experience that indeed it is more blessed to give than to receive.

The years have flown. The old chapel is gone, a victim of industrialization. The boys and girls who learned, who laughed, who grew under the direction of that inspired teacher of truth have never forgotten her love or her lessons.

Even today when we sing that old favorite—

Thanks for the Sabbath School. Hail
to the day
When evil and error are fleeing away.

Thanks for our teachers who labor
with care
That we in the light of the gospel
may share.

[Hymns, no. 278]

—we think of Lucy Gertsch, our Sunday School teacher, for we loved Lucy, and Lucy loved us.

Let us ever have an attitude of gratitude for our teachers.

Gratitude for our friends

Fourth, let us have gratitude for our *friends*. Our most cherished friend is our partner in marriage. This old world would be so much better off today if kindness and deference were daily a reflection of our gratitude for wife, for husband.

The Lord spoke the word *friend* almost with a reverence. He said, "Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you" (John 15:14).

True friends put up with our idiosyncrasies. They have a profound influence in our lives.

Oscar Benson, a Scouter of renown, had a hobby of interviewing men on death row in various prisons throughout the country. He once reported that 125 of these men had said they had never known a decent man.

In the depths of World War II, I experienced an expression of true friendship. Jack Hepworth and I were teenagers. We had grown up in the same neighborhood. One afternoon I saw Jack running down the sidewalk toward me. When we met, I saw that there were tears in his eyes. In a voice choked with emotion, he blurted out the words, "Tom, my brother Joe, who is in the Navy Air Corps, has been killed in a fiery plane crash!" We embraced. We wept. We sorrowed. I felt highly complimented that instinctively Jack, my friend, felt the urgency to share with me his grief. We can all be grateful for such friends.

Gratitude for our country

Fifth, may we acknowledge gratitude for our *country*—the land of our birth.

When we ponder that vast throng who have died honorably defending home and hearth, we contemplate those immortal words, “Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends” (John 15:13). The feelings of heartfelt gratitude for the supreme sacrifice made by so many cannot be confined to a Memorial Day, a military parade, or a decorated grave.

At the famed Theatre Royal, situated on Drury Lane in London, England, is a beautifully framed plaque containing words which touch my very soul and prompt feelings of deep gratitude:

1914–1918

Actors, musicians, writers and workers for the stage who have given their lives for their country. Honour to the immortal dead, that great . . . company of shining souls who gave their youth that the world might grow old in peace. Their name liveth forever more. These nobly played their parts, these heard the call for God and King and home. They gave their all.

Since ye who pass in quest of happy hours

Behold the price at which those hours were bought,

Strew here the fragrance of memorial flowers,

The silent tribute of a grateful thought.²

Gratitude for our Savior

Sixth and finally—even supremely—let us reflect gratitude for our *Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ*. His glorious gospel provides answers to life’s greatest questions: Where did we

come from? Why are we here? Where does my spirit go when I die? His called missionaries bring to those who live in darkness the light of divine truth:

Go, ye messengers of glory;
Run, ye legates of the skies.
Go and tell the pleasing story
That a glorious angel flies,
Great and mighty, great and mighty,
With a message from the skies.
[Hymns, no. 262]

He taught us how to pray. He taught us how to live. He taught us how to die. His life is a legacy of love. The sick He healed; the downtrodden He lifted; the sinner He saved.

Only He stood alone. Some Apostles doubted; one betrayed Him. The Roman soldiers pierced His side. The angry mob took His life. There yet rings from Golgotha’s hill His compassionate words, “Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do” (Luke 23:34).

Earlier, perhaps perceiving the culmination of His earthly mission, He spoke the lament, “Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head” (Luke 9:58). “No room in the inn” was not a singular expression of rejection—just the first. Yet He invites you and me to host Him. “Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me” (Revelation 3:20).

Who was this Man of sorrows, acquainted with grief? Who is this King of glory, this Lord of hosts? He is our Master. He is our Savior. He is the Son of God. He is the author of our salvation. He beckons, “Follow me” (Matthew 4:19). He instructs, “Go, and do thou likewise” (Luke 10:37). He pleads, “Keep my commandments” (John 14:15).

Let us follow Him. Let us emulate His example. Let us obey His word. By so doing, we give to Him the divine gift of gratitude.

My sincere prayer is that we may, in our individual lives, reflect that marvelous virtue: an attitude of gratitude. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

NOTES

1. "Ac-cen-tu-ate the Positive," lyrics by Johnny Mercer (ASCAP, 1945).
2. Louise N. Parter.

The choir sang "Let Zion in Her Beauty Rise" without announcement.

President Hinckley

President Thomas S. Monson, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, has addressed us, followed by the choir singing that stirring anthem "Let Zion in Her Beauty Rise."

President Howard W. Hunter, President of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, will be our next speaker.

President Howard W. Hunter

Love others as God loves us

In an important message to the Latter-day Saints in Nauvoo just one year before his tragic and untimely martyrdom, the Prophet Joseph Smith said:

"If we would secure and cultivate the love of others, we must love others, even our enemies as well as friends. . . . Christians should cease wrangling and contending with each other, and cultivate the principles of union and friendship in their midst" (*History of the Church*, 5:498-99).

That is magnificent counsel today, even as it was 150 years ago. The world in which we live, whether close to home or far away, needs the gospel of Jesus Christ. It provides the only way the world will ever know peace. We need to be kinder with one another, more gentle and forgiving. We need to be slower to anger and more prompt to help. We need to extend the hand of friendship and resist the hand of retribution. In short, we need to love one another with the pure love of Christ, with genuine charity and compassion and, if necessary, shared suffering, for that is the way God loves us.

"Lord, I would follow thee"

In our worship services, we often sing a lovely hymn with text written by Susan Evans McCloud. May I recall a few lines of that hymn for you?

Savior, may I learn to love thee,
Walk the path that thou hast shown,
Pause to help and lift another,
Finding strength beyond my
own. . . .

Who am I to judge another
When I walk imperfectly?
In the quiet heart is hidden
Sorrow that the eye can't see. . . .

I would be my brother's keeper;
I would learn the healer's art.
To the wounded and the weary
I would show a gentle heart.
I would be my brother's keeper—
Lord, I would follow thee.
[*Hymns*, no. 220]

We need to walk more resolutely and more charitably the path that Jesus has shown. We need to "pause to help and lift another," and surely we will find "strength beyond [our] own." If we would do more to learn "the healer's

art," there would be untold chances to use it, to touch the "wounded and the weary" and show to all "a gentle[r] heart." Yes, Lord, we should follow thee.

Charity, the pure love of Christ

"A new commandment I give unto you," he said, "That ye love one another; . . . By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another" (John 13:34-35). This love that we should have for our brothers and sisters in the human family, and that Christ has for every one of us, is called charity or "the pure love of Christ" (Moroni 7:47). It is the love that prompted the suffering and sacrifice of Christ's atonement. It is the highest pinnacle the human soul can reach and the deepest expression of the human heart.

We have a feeling of appreciation that our women's Relief Society organization, celebrating this year its sesquicentennial anniversary, has always had as its theme "Charity Never Fails." Charity encompasses all other godly virtues. It distinguishes both the beginning and the end of the plan of salvation. When all else fails, charity—Christ's love—will *not* fail. It is the greatest of all divine attributes.

Out of the abundance of his heart, Jesus spoke to the poor, the downtrodden, the widows, the little children; to farmers and fishermen and those who tended goats and sheep; to strangers and foreigners, the rich, the politically powerful, as well as the unfriendly Pharisees and scribes. He ministered to the poor, the hungry, the deprived, the sick. He blessed the lame, the blind, the deaf, and other people with physical disabilities. He drove out the demons and evil spirits that had caused mental or emotional illness. He purified those who were burdened with sin. He taught lessons of love and repeatedly demonstrated unselfish service to others. All were recipients of his love.

All were "privileged the one like unto the other, and none [were] forbidden" (2 Nephi 26:28). These are all expressions and examples of his unbounded charity.

The world in which we live would benefit greatly if men and women everywhere would exercise the pure love of Christ, which is kind, meek, and lowly. It is without envy or pride. It is selfless because it seeks nothing in return. It does not countenance evil or ill will, nor rejoice in iniquity; it has no place for bigotry, hatred, or violence. It refuses to condone ridicule, vulgarity, abuse, or ostracism. It encourages diverse people to live together in Christian love regardless of religious belief, race, nationality, financial standing, education, or culture.

The Savior has commanded us to love one another as he has loved us; to clothe ourselves "with the bond of charity" (D&C 88:125), as he so clothed himself. We are called upon to purify our inner feelings, to change our hearts, to make our outward actions and appearance conform to what we say we believe and feel inside. We are to be true disciples of Christ.

Vern Crowley learns a lesson in love

As a young man, Brother Vern Crowley said he learned something of the crucial lesson the Prophet Joseph had taught the early Saints in Nauvoo when he told them to "love others, even our enemies as well as friends." This is a good lesson for each of us.

After his father became ill, Vern Crowley took responsibility for running the family wrecking yard although he was only fifteen years of age. Some customers occasionally took unfair advantage of the young man, and parts were disappearing from the lot overnight. Vern was angry and vowed to catch someone and make an example of him. Vengeance would be his.

Just after his father had started to recover from his illness, Vern was mak-

ing his rounds of the yard one night at closing time. It was nearly dark. In a distant corner of the property, he caught sight of someone carrying a large piece of machinery toward the back fence. He ran like a champion athlete and caught the young thief. His first thought was to take out his frustrations with his fists and then drag the boy to the front office and call the police. His heart was full of anger and vengeance. He had caught his thief, and he intended to get his just dues.

Out of nowhere, Vern's father came along, put his weak and infirm hand on his son's shoulder, and said, "I see you're a bit upset, Vern. Can I handle this?" He then walked over to the young would-be thief and put his arm around his shoulder, looked him in the eye for a moment, and said, "Son, tell me, why are you doing this? Why were you trying to steal that transmission?" Then Mr. Crowley started walking toward the office with his arm around the boy, asking questions about the young man's car problems as they walked. By the time they had arrived at the office, the father said, "Well, I think your clutch is gone and that's causing your problem."

In the meantime, Vern was fuming. "Who cares about his clutch?" he thought. "Let's call the police and get this over with." But his father just kept talking. "Vern, get him a clutch. Get him a throwout bearing too. And get him a pressure plate. That should take care of it." The father handed all of the parts to the young man who had attempted robbery and said, "Take these. And here's the transmission, too. You don't have to steal, young man. Just ask for it. There's a way out of every problem. People are willing to help."

Brother Vern Crowley said he learned an everlasting lesson in love that day. The young man came back to the lot often. Voluntarily, month by month, he paid for all of the parts Vic Crowley had given him, including the

transmission. During those visits he asked Vern why his dad was the way he was and why he did what he did. Vern told him something of their Latter-day Saint beliefs and how much his father loved the Lord and loved people. Eventually the would-be thief was baptized. Vern later said, "It's hard now to describe the feelings I had and what I went through in that experience. I, too, was young. I had caught my crook. I was going to extract the utmost penalty. But my father taught me a different way."

A more excellent way

A different way? A better way? A higher way? A more excellent way? Oh, how the world could benefit from such a magnificent lesson. As Moroni declares:

"Wherefore, whoso believeth in God might with surety hope for a better world. . . .

"In the gift of his Son hath God prepared a more excellent way" (Ether 12:4, 11).

President David O. McKay once said:

"The peace of Christ does not come by seeking the superficial things of life, neither does it come except as it springs from the individual's heart. Jesus said to his disciples: 'Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you' " (*Gospel Ideals* [Salt Lake City: Improvement Era, 1953], pp. 39-40).

In all the realms of daily living and in a world of so much need, we should so live that one day we will hear the King of Kings say to us:

"For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in:

"Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me" (Matthew 25:35-36).

And if we should have occasion to say: "Lord, when saw we thee an hungry, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee?"—then I am certain we will hear this reply: "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me" (Matthew 25:37–40).

Love others to secure peace

We need a more peaceful world, growing out of more peaceful families and neighborhoods and communities. To secure and cultivate such peace, "we must love others, even our enemies as well as our friends." The world needs the gospel of Jesus Christ. Those who are filled with the love of Christ do not seek to force others to do better; they inspire others to do better, indeed inspire them to the pursuit of God. We need to extend the hand of friendship. We need to be kinder, more gentle,

more forgiving, and slower to anger. We need to love one another with the pure love of Christ. May this be our course and our desire.

I add my witness that Jesus is the Christ, the Savior of the world, and that this is his Church, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The choir sang "The Earth Is the Lord's" without announcement.

President Hinckley

Thank you, President Hunter, for your moving remarks. The choir has sung "The Earth Is the Lord's."

The choir and congregation will now join in singing "Let Us All Press On," following which we shall hear from Bishop Robert D. Hales, the Presiding Bishop of the Church.

The choir and congregation sang "Let Us All Press On."

Bishop Robert D. Hales

Gratitude for the goodness of God

A few months ago I had an experience that took me to the very edge of this mortal existence. As many of you know, I suffered a heart attack last August. I had the opportunity of knowing firsthand of the healing strength that comes through united prayer. For that I will always be grateful. Thank you for your prayers and for your concern. Your kindness to me lifted my spirits and aided in the healing process. I have been greatly blessed with improving health and strength.

Throughout that experience there is one particular feeling that began in-

side of me almost immediately and intensified as time went on and became overpowering during my illness and during my recovery and remains with me still. I became overwhelmed with a feeling of deep gratitude for the goodness of God.

Gratitude for the Atonement

My deepest gratitude is for the atoning sacrifice of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. The Atonement is the foundation upon which all gospel truths reside.

The Savior tells us:

"I came into the world to do the will of my Father, because my Father sent me.

"And my Father sent me that I might be lifted up upon the cross" (3 Nephi 27:13-14).

The Prophet Joseph Smith recorded "that he came into the world, even Jesus, to be crucified for the world, and to bear the sins of the world, and to sanctify the world, and to cleanse it from all unrighteousness; That through him all might be saved" (D&C 76:41-42).

I bear my testimony in all gratitude for the knowledge that our Savior lives, that he was resurrected, that there is a redemption and a salvation through the Atonement for all mankind—that all will be resurrected. I am thankful for that knowledge.

Show gratitude through obedience

The Lord said, "If ye love me, keep my commandments" (John 14:15). Our obedience to the laws, ordinances, and commandments is the greatest expression of love and gratitude that we can bestow upon him.

Gratitude for repentance

Gratitude is also the foundation upon which repentance is built.

The Atonement brought mercy through repentance to balance justice. How thankful I am for the doctrine of repentance. Repentance is essential to salvation. We are mortal—we are not perfect—we will make mistakes. When we make mistakes and do not repent, we suffer.

The prophet Mormon taught us that he saw people sorrowing, thinking it was repentance; but then he taught us, "Behold this my joy was vain, for their sorrowing was not unto repentance, *because of the goodness of God*; but it was rather the sorrowing of the damned, because the Lord would not

always suffer them to take happiness in sin" (Mormon 2:13; italics added).

Mormon teaches us that there will always be suffering and sorrow in sin, but to repent only because we feel bad or because we have suffered or because we are sorrowful does not show that we understand the goodness of God.

The point I would like to make is that when we express thankfulness to God and to his Son, Jesus Christ, we base our faith and repentance upon their forgiveness and their goodness.

Jesus' expressions of gratitude

How grateful I am for the scriptures, which give examples of Jesus' expressing thanks to his Heavenly Father.

At the Last Supper, "the Lord Jesus the same night . . . he was betrayed took bread: And *when he had given thanks*, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you" (1 Corinthians 11:23-24; italics added). "And he took the cup, *and when he had given thanks*, he gave it to them: and they all drank of it" (Mark 14:23; italics added).

Like the Savior, it is important for each of us to prepare ourselves to give thanks for the atoning sacrifice each week as we partake of the sacrament.

The story of Lazarus is of great significance to me as I have studied the goodness of Jesus.

Mary greeted Jesus. Her brother, Lazarus, had died. Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her were also weeping. Jesus, in great compassion, "groaned in the spirit, and was troubled" (John 11:33). Jesus asked, "Where have ye laid him?" (11:34). "Jesus wept" (11:35).

"Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead was laid. And Jesus lifted up his eyes, and said, Father, *I thank thee that thou hast heard me*" (11:41; italics added).

And then Jesus asked Lazarus to come forth from the dead (see 11:43).

Might it be well for us to remember to give thanks to our Heavenly Father prior to asking for his help in solving our problems?

John 6:5-14 beautifully tells the account of Jesus and the five loaves and two fishes:

"And Jesus took the loaves; *and when he had given thanks*, he distributed to the disciples" (John 6:11; *italics added*).

On another occasion the disciples of Jesus prayed earnestly for the Holy Ghost. And when they were filled with the Holy Ghost, Jesus "bowed himself to the earth, and he said:

"Father, *I thank thee* that thou hast given the Holy Ghost unto these whom I have chosen; and it is because of their belief in me that I have chosen them out of the world.

"Father, I pray thee that thou wilt give the Holy Ghost unto all them that shall believe in their words" (3 Nephi 19:19-21; *italics added*).

Express gratitude through prayer

Prayer is an essential part of conveying appreciation to our Heavenly Father. He awaits our expressions of gratefulness each morning and night in sincere, simple prayer from our hearts for our many blessings, gifts, and talents.

Through expression of prayerful gratitude and thanksgiving, we show our dependence upon a higher source of wisdom and knowledge—God the Father and his Son, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. We are taught to "live in thanksgiving daily" (Alma 34:38).

"O how you ought to thank your heavenly King!" King Benjamin taught (Mosiah 2:19).

Gratitude for parents and family

As the years pass I become more grateful for my parents. They lived the gospel, studied the scriptures, and bore

testimony of God the Father and his Son, Jesus Christ. They also bore testimony of the Prophet Joseph Smith.

Even as a child it was through their teachings and example that I received an absolute knowledge of the existence of eternal life with our goal to return with honor, as a family, into the presence of our Heavenly Father.

Among the lessons taught me by my father was gratitude for what it meant to be a General Authority. Some years ago Father, then over eighty years of age, was expecting a visit from a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles on a snowy winter day. Father, an artist, had painted a picture of the home of the Apostle. Rather than have the painting delivered to him, this sweet Apostle wanted to go personally to pick the painting up and thank my father for it. Knowing that Father would be concerned that everything was in readiness for the forthcoming visit, I dropped by his home. Because of the depth of the snow, snowplows had caused a snowbank in front of the walkway to the front door. Father had shoveled the walks and then labored to remove the snowbank. He returned to the house exhausted and in pain. When I arrived, he was experiencing heart pain from overexertion and stressful anxiety. My first concern was to warn him of his unwise physical efforts. Didn't he know what the result of his labor would be?

"Robert," he said through interrupted short breaths, "do you realize an Apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ is coming to my home? The walks must be clean. He should not have to come through a snowdrift." He raised his hand, saying, "Oh, Robert, don't ever forget or take for granted the privilege it is to know and to serve with Apostles of the Lord."

I am grateful for the opportunity to serve with the Lord's anointed and for the opportunity to give testimony of

those who have been called to lead us as prophets, seers, and revelators in this dispensation.

I am also grateful for my counselors who serve with me and for the Seventy and for all the priesthood and auxiliary leaders throughout the Church for their faithfulness. I am grateful for my father's example of love and caring for my mother. In his eighties he taught us that he would be leaving us and joining Mother, who had passed on before him, and that he wanted us to live worthily to reunite in heaven and become an eternal family. For these teachings we, his children, are grateful.

I am thankful for a mother who was devoted to her husband and children—a mother who taught by example. I am thankful for her dedicated service in the Relief Society for over thirty years. At the age of sixteen, upon receiving my driver's license, I was privileged to learn from her as she took me along when she assisted the bishop in caring for the poor and the needy.

I am thankful for a brother and sister who love the Lord and have remained true and faithful. I express my love for their caring ways these past six decades.

I love my dear companion, Mary, my two sons, Steven and David, and their families. May I express appreciation for all the joy they have brought into my life. A colleague some years ago told me that my greatest asset was my dear wife, Mary. Of that fact I give public appreciation for what she has meant in my life.

Those who are blessed to have their companions, their mothers and their fathers, their brothers and their sisters, sons and daughters with them in this earthly existence, please express your love for them and gratitude to them while you can on this side of the veil.

Give thanks for blessings

We must remember to give thanks to our Heavenly Father for the blessings and gifts that have been given to us.

"And ye must give thanks unto God in the Spirit for whatsoever blessing ye are blessed with" (D&C 46:32).

"And all these gifts come from God, for the benefit of the children of God" (D&C 46:26).

As the Presiding Bishop, I am grateful for the members of this Church who so willingly give of their time, their means, and their talents through tithes and offerings and through acts of compassionate service. What a wonderful example they set for their children and for their neighbors. It would be well to also give thanks for the youth of this Church, for their faithfulness. They are indeed a royal generation, preparing as they and their children and grandchildren prepare for the second coming of Jesus Christ.

Gratitude is a state of appreciation, an act of thanksgiving, which causes us to be humble because we recognize an act of kindness, service, or caring from someone else which lifts us and strengthens us.

Ingratitude is the attitude of being unaware or not recognizing when someone has assisted us or helped us or, even worse, when we know we have been helped and have not given thanks privately or publicly.

Gratitude brings peace and healing

In some quiet way the expression and feelings of gratitude have a wonderful cleansing or healing nature. Gratitude brings warmth to the giver and the receiver alike.

Gratitude expressed to our Heavenly Father in prayer for what we have brings a calming peace—a peace which allows us to not canker our souls for what we don't have. Gratitude brings a

peace that helps us overcome the pain of adversity and failure. Gratitude on a daily basis means we express appreciation for what we have now without qualification for what we had in the past or desire in the future. A recognition of and appreciation for our gifts and talents which have been given also allows us to acknowledge the need for help and assistance from the gifts and talents possessed by others.

Thank the Lord in all things

Gratitude is a divine principle:

"Thou shalt thank the Lord thy God in all things" (D&C 59:7).

This scripture means that we express thankfulness for what happens, not only for the good things in life but also for the opposition and challenges of life that add to our experience and faith. We put our lives in his hands,

realizing that all that transpires will be for our experience.

When in prayer we say, "Thy will be done," we are really expressing faith and gratitude and acknowledging that we will accept whatever happens in our lives.

That we may feel true gratitude for the goodness of God for all the blessings that have been given to us and express those feelings of thankfulness in prayer to our Heavenly Father, is my prayer in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

Bishop Robert D. Hales, Presiding Bishop of the Church, has just spoken to us.

Elder Boyd K. Packer of the Council of the Twelve Apostles will now address us.

Elder Boyd K. Packer

I have been a General Authority for over thirty years and a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles for twenty-two. During those years I have interviewed I don't know how many, surely thousands, of members of the Church and have talked with them in intimate terms of their worthiness, their sorrow, and their happiness. I mention that only in the hope that the credential of experience may persuade you to consider matters which have us deeply worried.

Moral environment

Today I speak to members of the Church as an environmentalist. My message is not on the *physical* but on the *moral and spiritual* environment in which we must raise our families. As we test the *moral* environment, we find the *pollution* index is spiraling upward.

The Book of Mormon depicts humanity struggling through a "mist of darkness" and defines the darkness as the "temptations of the devil" (1 Nephi 8:23; 12:17). So dense was that *moral pollution* that many followed "strange roads" and "fell away into forbidden paths and were lost" (1 Nephi 8:28; see 8:23–32).

The deliberate pollution of the fountain of life now clouds our moral environment. The gift of mortal life and the capacity to kindle other lives is a supernal blessing. Its worth is *incalculable!*

The spiritual environment

The rapid, sweeping deterioration of values is characterized by a preoccupation—even an obsession—with the procreative act. Abstinence before marriage and fidelity within it are openly scoffed at, marriage and parent-

hood ridiculed as burdensome, unnecessary. Modesty, a virtue of a refined individual or society, is all but gone.

The tempter

The adversary is jealous toward all who have the power to beget life. He cannot beget life; he is impotent. He and those who followed him were cast out and forfeited the right to a mortal body. His angels even begged to inhabit the bodies of swine (see Matthew 8:31). And the revelations tell us that "he seeketh that all men might be miserable like unto himself" (2 Nephi 2:27).

With ever fewer exceptions, what we see and read and hear have the mating act as a central theme. Censorship is forced offstage as a violation of individual freedom.

That which should be absolutely private is disrobed and acted out center stage. In the shadows backstage are addiction, pornography, perversion, infidelity, abortion, incest, and molestation. In company with them now is a plague of biblical proportion. And all of them are on the increase.

Society excuses itself from responsibility except for teaching the physical process of reproduction to children in school to prevent pregnancy and disease and providing teenagers with devices which are supposed to protect them from both.

When any effort is made to include values in these courses—basic universal values, not just values of the Church, but of civilization, of society itself—the protest arises, "You are imposing religion upon us, infringing upon our freedom."

Freedom to choose

While we pass laws to reduce pollution of the earth, any proposal to

protect the moral and spiritual environment is shouted down and marched against as infringing upon liberty, agency, freedom, the right to choose.

Interesting how one virtue, when given exaggerated or fanatical emphasis, can be used to batter down another, with freedom, a virtue, invoked to protect *vice*. Those determined to transgress see any regulation of their life-style as interfering with their agency and seek to have their actions condoned by making them legal.

People who are otherwise sensible say, "I do not intend to indulge, but I vote for freedom of choice for those who do."

Flawed argument

Regardless of how lofty and moral the "pro-choice" argument sounds, it is badly flawed. With that same logic one could argue that all traffic signs and barriers which keep the careless from danger should be pulled down on the theory that each individual must be free to choose how close to the edge he will go.

No free agency

The phrase "*free agency*" does not appear in scripture. The only agency spoken of there is *moral agency*, "which," the Lord said, "I have given unto him, that every man may be *accountable* for his own sins in the day of judgment" (D&C 101:78; italics added).

Heeding the warning

And the Lord warned members of his Church, "Let not that which I have appointed be polluted by mine enemies, *by the consent of those who call themselves after my name*: For this is a very sore and grievous sin against me, and against my people" (D&C 101:97–98; italics added).

Because the laws of man, by and large, do not raise moral issues, we are taught to honor, sustain, and obey the law (see Articles of Faith 1:12) and that "he that keepeth the laws of God hath no need to break the laws of the land" (D&C 58:21).

The right to speak out

When a moral issue does arise, it is the responsibility of the leaders of the Church to speak out. Gambling, for instance, certainly is a moral issue. Life is a moral issue. When morality is involved, we have both the *right* and the *obligation* to raise a warning voice. We do not as a church speak on political issues unless morality is involved. In thirty years and thousands of interviews, I have never once asked members of the Church what political party they belonged to.

Physical and moral laws

There are both moral and physical laws "irrevocably decreed in heaven before the foundations of this world" (D&C 130:20) which man cannot overrule.

For instance, do you think a vote to repeal the law of gravity would do any good?

Unenforceable

Suppose a law decreed that all children would be taken from their parents and raised by the state. Such a law would be wicked but probably could be enforced. Such things have been done before.

But suppose an article of that law stated, "Within fifteen days the mother will cease all emotional ties to her child."

That provision is absolutely unenforceable. No matter how severe the penalty or the number of enforcers, it is absolutely unenforceable because it

contravenes both natural and moral law.

No matter if fifteen weeks or months or fifteen years were allowed, it cannot be enforced! It may work with animals, but "all flesh," the scriptures teach, "is not the same flesh: but there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of beasts" (1 Corinthians 15:39). It cannot be made to work with human mothers. Never!

A man-made law against nature would be as impossible to defend as a law annulling love between mother and child would be impossible to enforce!

Children of God

No greater ideal has been revealed than the supernal truth that we are the children of God, and we differ, by virtue of our creation, from all other living things (see Moses 6:8–10, 22, 59).

The evil idea

No idea has been more *destructive* of happiness; no philosophy has produced more sorrow, more heartbreak and mischief; no idea has done more to destroy the family than the idea that we are not the offspring of God, only advanced animals, compelled to yield to every carnal urge.

Animals are not subject to moral law. Nevertheless, while by and large they are promiscuous in responding to their mating instincts, their mating rituals have set patterns and have rigid limitations. For instance, animals do not pair up with their own gender to satisfy their mating instincts. Nor are these instincts expressed in the molestation of their offspring.

The source of life is now relegated to the level of unwed pleasure, bought and sold and even defiled in satanic rituals. Children of God can willfully surrender to their carnal nature and, without remorse, defy the

laws of morality and degrade themselves even below the beasts.

Most abominable

If we pollute our fountains of life, there will be penalties "exquisite" and "hard to bear" (see D&C 19:15), more than all of the physical pleasure ever could be worth. Alma told his son Corianton, "Know ye not, my son, that these things are an abomination in the sight of the Lord; yea, most abominable above all sins save it be the shedding of innocent blood or denying the Holy Ghost?" (Alma 39:5).

The code for moral law is found in the scriptures, stated as simply as, "Wickedness never was happiness" (Alma 41:10). The scriptures speak in general terms, leaving us free to apply the principles of the gospel to meet the infinite variety of life. But when they say "thou shalt not," we had better pay attention.

The only legitimate employment of the power of procreation is between husband and wife, man and woman, who have been legally and lawfully married. Anything else violates the commandments of God. From Alma, "If ye speak against it, it matters not, for the word of God must be fulfilled" (Alma 5:58).

The measure of a successful parent

It is a great challenge to raise a family in the darkening mists of our moral environment.

We emphasize that the greatest work you will do will be within the walls of your home (see Harold B. Lee, in Conference Report, Apr. 1973, p. 130; or *Ensign*, July 1973, p. 98), and that "no other success can compensate for failure in the home" (see David O. McKay, in Conference Report, Apr. 1935, p. 116; quoting J. E. McCulloch, *Home: The Savior of Civilization* [Wash-

ington, D.C.: The Southern Co-operative League, 1924], p. 42).

The measure of our success as parents, however, will not rest solely on how our children turn out. That judgment would be just only if we could raise our families in a perfectly moral environment, and that now is not possible.

It is not uncommon for responsible parents to lose one of their children, for a time, to influences over which they have no control. They agonize over rebellious sons or daughters. They are puzzled over why they are so helpless when they have tried so hard to do what they should.

It is my conviction that those wicked influences one day will be overruled.

"The Prophet Joseph Smith declared—and he never taught a more comforting doctrine—that the eternal sealings of faithful parents and the divine promises made to them for valiant service in the Cause of Truth, would save not only themselves, but likewise their posterity. Though some of the sheep may wander, the eye of the Shepherd is upon them, and sooner or later they will feel the tentacles of Divine Providence reaching out after them and drawing them back to the fold. Either in this life or the life to come, they will return. They will have to pay their debt to justice; they will suffer for their sins; and may tread a thorny path; but if it leads them at last, like the penitent Prodigal, to a loving and forgiving father's heart and home, the painful experience will not have been in vain. Pray for your careless and disobedient children; hold on to them with your faith. Hope on, trust on, till you see the salvation of God" (Orson F. Whitney, in Conference Report, Apr. 1929, p. 110).

We cannot overemphasize the value of temple marriage, the binding ties of the sealing ordinance, and the standards of worthiness required of

them. When parents keep the covenants they have made at the altar of the temple, their children will be forever bound to them. President Brigham Young said:

"Let the father and mother, who are members of this Church and Kingdom, take a righteous course, and strive with all their might never to do a wrong, but to do good all their lives; if they have one child or one hundred children, if they conduct themselves towards them as they should, binding them to the Lord by their faith and prayers, I care not where those children go, they are bound up to their parents by an everlasting tie, and no power of earth or hell can separate them from their parents in eternity; they will return again to the fountain from whence they sprang" (*Discourses of Brigham Young*, ed. John A. Widtsoe [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1941], p. 208).

Repentance

In the battle of life, the adversary takes enormous numbers of prisoners, and many who know of no way to escape and are pressed into his service. Every soul confined to a concentration camp of sin and guilt has a key to the gate. The adversary cannot hold them if they know how to use it. The key is labeled *Repentance*. The twin principles of repentance and forgiveness exceed in strength the awesome power of the adversary.

I know of no sins connected with the moral standard for which we cannot be forgiven. I do not exempt abortion. The formula is stated in forty words:

"Behold, he who has repented of his sins, the same is forgiven, and I, the Lord, remember them no more.

"By this ye may know if a man repenteth of his sins—behold, he will confess them and forsake them" (D&C 58:42–43).

I will remember your sins no more

However long and painful the process of repentance, the Lord has said:

"This is the covenant . . . I will make with them. . . I will put my *laws* into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them;

"And *their sins and iniquities* will I remember no more" (Hebrews 10:16–17; italics added).

Civilizations, like Sodom and Gomorrah, destroyed themselves by disobedience to the laws of morality. "For the Spirit of the Lord will not always strive with man. And when the Spirit ceaseth to strive with man then cometh speedy destruction" (2 Nephi 26:11; see also Genesis 6:3; Ether 2:15; D&C 1:33; Moses 8:17).

God grant that we will come to our senses and protect our moral environment from this mist of darkness which deepens day by day. The fate of all humanity hangs precariously in the balance.

And may we have the protection of Him who is our Father and our God, and may we merit the love and blessings of His Son, our Redeemer, in whose name, even the name of Jesus Christ, I bear witness, amen.

The choir sang "Home's Bright Love" without announcement.

President Hinckley

Elder Boyd K. Packer of the Counsel of the Twelve has just spoken to us, followed by the choir singing "Home's Bright Love."

Following my remarks, the choir will conclude this session by singing "Thy Servants Are Prepared." The benediction will then be offered by Elder Durrel A. Woolsey of the Seventy, and we shall adjourn until two o'clock this afternoon.

President Gordon B. Hinckley

Young men and women of faith

My brethren and sisters, I have enjoyed several heartwarming experiences in recent months. I use them as a basis for something I wish to say particularly to the youth and young adults of the Church, many thousands of whom are joined with us in this great world conference.

A few weeks ago I looked into the faces of a huge fireside congregation who had gathered on a Sunday evening on the campus of Brigham Young University. I was told there were about eighteen thousand in attendance. They were bright-eyed and attentive. They were eager and alert. They gave their undivided attention, and when the meeting was over they were generous in their expressions of appreciation.

A few months before that I met with students of the University of California at Los Angeles and the University of Southern California, who gathered in our institute building in Los Angeles. Most of these are involved in graduate studies. They are in a challenging and wonderful season of their lives, concerned with great and serious undertakings. I have no doubt they will become leaders in their chosen disciplines. But they are also young men and women with faith who gathered that Sunday to listen and learn of the things of God.

Within the past month I have met with other comparable groups in Spain and Italy, in Switzerland and Denmark. In each place they were clean, neatly dressed, with an eagerness that was wonderful and infectious. It mattered not that they spoke a different language from mine and that they live in a different part of the world. They are partakers of the same gospel of Jesus Christ with a tremendous understanding of that gospel and a deep and abiding sense of gratitude for it.

Then two weeks ago I was in southern Utah on the campus of Southern Utah University. Sprinkled all through that congregation were young men and women, many of whom are enrolled in that school and who again reflect in their appearance and manner something that is wholesome and uplifting.

These are some of our young people of whom I am proud and concerning whom I have a great sense of gratitude and a compelling sense of optimism. In saying this, I do not wish to imply that all is well with all of them. There are many who have troubles and many who live far beneath the high expectations we have concerning them. There are also those who waver in their faith and who are troubled and frustrated within themselves. There are some, I regret to say, who step over the line of acceptable moral behavior and suffer great tragedies in their lives. But even considering these, I have great confidence in our young people as a whole. I regard you as the finest generation in the history of the Church. I compliment you, and I have in my heart a great feeling of love and respect and appreciation for you.

Each time I have stood before such a group, there has come into my mind the great and prophetic statement made by Peter of old. Said he, "Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light" (1 Peter 2:9).

I know of no other statement which more aptly describes you nor which sets before you a higher ideal by which to shape and guide your lives.

A crisis of behavior and belief

Some time ago I read a letter to a newspaper editor which was highly

critical of the Church. I have forgotten the exact language, but it included a question something like this: When are the Mormons going to stop being different and become a part of the mainstream of America?

About this same time there came to my desk a copy of an address given by Senator Dan Coats of Indiana. He spoke of a study made by "a commission of educational, political, medical and business leaders" dealing with the problems of American youth. The committee issued a report called *Code Blue*. That report, according to the Senator, concluded, "Never before has one generation of American teenagers been less healthy, less cared for, or less prepared for life than their parents were at the same age."

He went on to say: "I have seen the parade of pathologies—they are unending and increasing:

"Suicide is now the second leading cause of death among adolescents, increasing 300 percent since 1950.

"Teen pregnancy has risen 621 percent since 1940. More than a million teenage girls get pregnant each year. Eighty-five percent of teenage boys who impregnate teenage girls eventually abandon them.

"The teen homicide rate has increased 232 percent since 1950. Homicide is now the leading cause of death among fifteen- to nineteen-year-old minority youth. . . .

"Every year substance abuse claims younger victims with harder drugs. A third of high school seniors get drunk once a week. The average age for first-time drug use is now thirteen years old."

The report reached a shocking conclusion. It said: "The challenges to the health and well-being of America's youth are not primarily rooted in illness or economics. Unlike the past, the problem is not childhood disease or unsanitary slums. The most basic cause of suffering . . . is profoundly self-

destructive behavior. Drinking. Drugs. Violence. Promiscuity. A crisis of behavior and belief. A crisis of character" (*Imprimis*, Sept. 1991, p. 1).

When I read those statements, I said to myself, If that is the mainstream of American youth, then I want to do all in my power to persuade and encourage our young people to stay away from it.

The loss of moral values

Now I know, as do you, that there are millions of young people in this nation and in every nation who live wholesome, good lives and who are ambitious to make something of themselves. But no one can blink at the fact that in this land, and in other lands across the world, there is an epidemic affecting the lives of millions of youth. It is a sickness that comes of a loss of values, of an abandonment of moral absolutes. The virus which has infected them comes of leaderless families, leaderless schools, leaderless communities. It comes of an attitude that says, "We will not teach moral values. We will leave the determination of such to the individual." Parents, in all too many cases, have abdicated their responsibility to "train up a child in the way he should go" so that "when he is old, he will not depart from it" (Proverbs 22:6). Educators in all too many cases have adopted an attitude of moral neutrality.

Many public officers have abandoned any reverent use of the name of God in public meetings, thereby closing the door to Deity when it is plainly evident there is a need for wisdom beyond their own.

If we deny the one sure source of moral truth, then from whence will it come?

Lately we have been following in our papers the trial of a group of young men in New York City who attacked a family from Provo, Utah, to rob them

to get money to go to a discotheque. A son in that family, in trying to defend his mother, was killed.

I do not pretend to know all of the facts. But if what I have read is true, that tragedy finds its roots in the absence of a proper set of values implanted in the lives of those young men. They are now faced with tragic consequences, the spending of years in prison.

In a recent year more than four hundred youth were killed in Los Angeles by other young people, in many instances the result of gang warfare.

A chosen generation

And so I might continue with a picture familiar to all of you, but I return to Peter's great statement as I make a plea and offer a challenge: "Ye are a chosen generation." How very true that is. Notwithstanding all of the problems that we have, this, I believe, is the greatest age in the history of the world. And you young people of this generation are a part of it. You are the beneficiaries of it. Its fruits are here to bless your lives if you will grasp them and live worthy of them.

We today enjoy more of comfort, more of opportunity, more of the blessings of science and research than any generation in the history of the earth. We live longer to enjoy these things. When I was born, the life expectancy in the United States was fifty years. Today it is seventy-five-plus years. It is difficult for me to believe that during the seemingly short time I have lived, the average life expectancy in this nation has increased by a quarter of a century. There has been more of scientific discovery in my lifetime than in all the previous years of the history of mankind. I do not know why I have been so blessed as to have been born in this favored season. But I am grateful, profoundly grateful. I hope that you are also.

And on top of this flowering of knowledge has come an even greater blessing in the restoration of the gospel of Jesus Christ. You and I are experiencing the profound and wonderful blessings of the dispensation of the fullness of times. In this day and time there have been restored to the earth all of the principles, powers, blessings, and keys of all previous dispensations. By certain and clear and unequivocal revelation there has come knowledge of the living reality of God our Eternal Father and His Beloved Son, the Savior and Redeemer of the world.

John the Baptist has come to earth and conferred the priesthood of Aaron with "the keys of the ministering of angels, and of the gospel of repentance, and of baptism by immersion for the remission of sins" (D&C 13:1).

Peter, James, and John, who in mortality were ordained of the Lord, have restored to earth the divine power given by Jesus Himself when He said to them in the flesh, "I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven" (Matthew 16:19).

As a part of this great unfolding of knowledge and light and truth, there has come the Book of Mormon, this added testimony of the Lord Jesus Christ, a companion volume to the Holy Bible, a declaration of the living reality of the Son of God which speaks in testimony of Him as that knowledge was revealed to prophets who long ago came to know Him in this western hemisphere.

Truly, my dear young friends, you are a chosen generation. I hope you will never forget it. I hope you will never take it for granted. I hope there will grow in your hearts an overpowering sense of gratitude to God, who has made it possible for you to come upon the earth in this marvelous season of the world's history.

A royal priesthood

You young men, you *are* a royal priesthood. Do you ever pause to think of the wonder of it? You have had hands placed upon your heads to receive that same priesthood exercised by John who baptized Jesus of Nazareth. With worthiness in your lives, you may enjoy the comforting, protecting, guiding influence of ministering angels. No individual of earthly royalty has a blessing as great. Live for it. Be worthy of it, is my plea to each of you.

A holy nation

Peter speaks of "an holy nation." He does not refer to a political entity. He refers to a vast congregation of the Saints of God, men and women who walk in holiness before Him and who look to Jesus Christ as their Savior and their King. Young men and women, what a treasured privilege to have citizenship in this holy nation. Never belittle the rights, privileges, and responsibilities that flow therefrom.

A peculiar people

Peter's final description—"a peculiar people."

Of course you are peculiar. If the world continues its present trend, and if you walk in obedience to the doctrines and principles of this Church, you may become even more peculiar in the eyes of others.

Value system comes from God

To each of you I say this: As members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, you have been taught many values of divine origin. These values are based on the commandments which the finger of the Lord wrote upon the tablets of stone when Moses spoke with Jehovah upon

the mountain. You know them. You are familiar with them.

The values you have been taught likewise are based upon the beatitudes which Jesus spoke to the multitude. These, with others of His divine teachings, constitute a code of ethics, a code of values, a code of divine doctrine familiar to you and binding upon you.

To these have been added the precepts and commandments of modern revelation.

Combined together these basic, divinely given principles, laws, and commandments must constitute your value system. You cannot escape the consequences of their observance. If you will shape your lives according to their pattern, I do not hesitate to promise that you will know much of peace and happiness, of growth and achievement. To the degree that you fail to observe them, I regretfully say that the fruits will be disappointment, sadness, misery, and even tragedy.

You cannot afford . . .

You of this generation, this chosen generation, this royal priesthood, this holy nation, you of this peculiar people—you cannot with impunity follow practices out of harmony with values you have been taught. I challenge you to rise above the sordid elements of the world about you.

You cannot afford to drink beer and other liquors which can rob you of self-control. You cannot afford to smoke cigarettes or use other forms of tobacco and abandon the values which the Lord has set for your guidance. The partaking or distribution of illegal drugs is to be shunned as you would shun a terrible disease.

You cannot afford in any degree to become involved with pornography, whatever its form. You simply cannot afford to become involved in immoral practices—or to let down the bars of sexual restraint. The emotions that stir within you which make boys attractive

to girls and girls attractive to boys are part of a divine plan. But they must be restrained, subdued, and kept under control, or they will destroy you and make you unworthy of many of the great blessings which the Lord has in store for you.

Some young women have thought it clever to bear a child outside of marriage. That illusion soon fades. Teenage pregnancy brings only a harvest of regret, misery, self-depreciation, and unhappiness. It will not happen if there is a true understanding of values and the application of self-discipline on the part of both young men and young women.

You cannot afford to cheat in school or to shoplift or steal or do anything of the kind.

You cannot afford to do any of those things which do not square with the precepts, the teachings, the principles which the God of heaven has set down because of His love for you and His desire that your lives be rich and full and purposeful.

Nor can you afford to idle away your time in long hours watching the frivolous and damaging programming of which much of television is composed. There are better things for you to do. The world into which you will move will be terribly competitive. You

need to increase your education, to refine your skills, to hone your abilities so that you may fill responsibilities of consequence in the society of which you will become a part.

Ponder your purpose and potential

And so I invite you, every one of you within the sound of my voice, to think for a moment upon why you are here under the divine plan of your Father in Heaven and of your tremendous potential to do good during the life that He has given you.

Please know that we love you. We appreciate you. We have confidence in you, knowing that it will only be a short time until you must take over the leadership of this Church and of other great responsibilities which may be yours in the world in which you will live.

God bless you, I humbly pray, as I bear witness and testimony of these things in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The choir sang "Thy Servants Are Prepared."

Elder Durrel A. Woolsey offered the benediction.

SUNDAY AFTERNOON SESSION

The fifth session of the 162nd Annual General Conference commenced at 2:00 P.M. on Sunday, April 5, 1992. President Thomas S. Monson, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted this session.

The Tabernacle Choir provided the music, with Jerold Ottley and Donald Ripplinger conducting and John Longhurst at the organ.

President Monson made the following remarks as the meeting began:

President Thomas S. Monson

We welcome you this afternoon to the fifth and concluding session of the 162nd Annual General Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

President Ezra Taft Benson, who has attended other sessions of the conference, is watching this session in his apartment and has asked that I conduct.

To those in the Assembly Hall, we note that Elders Neal A. Maxwell, Douglas J. Martin, and Albert Choules, Jr., are seated on the stand.

We send our greetings and blessings to members of the Church and many friends everywhere who are participating in these proceedings by radio, television, cable, or satellite transmission.

The Tabernacle Choir, directed by Jerold Ottley and Donald Ripplinger and accompanied by John Longhurst, will provide the music for this session.

The choir will begin this service by singing "Great Is the Lord." The invocation will then be offered by Elder J. Richard Clarke of the Presidency of the Seventy.

The choir sang "Great Is the Lord."

Elder J. Richard Clarke offered the invocation.

President Monson

Thank you, Brother Clarke. The choir will now sing "Let the Mountains Shout for Joy." Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Council of the Twelve Apostles will then speak to us.

The choir sang "Let the Mountains Shout for Joy."

Elder Russell M. Nelson

This morning Elder Boyd K. Packer spoke of the "fountains of life." This afternoon I should like to speak of the "doors of death." Both are crucial components of life.

Recently at the funeral of a friend, I visited with two distinguished brothers—former surgical colleagues of mine—whose lovely companions had both passed away. They said they were going through the most difficult period of their lives, adjusting to the almost unbearable loss of their partners. These wonderful men then told of their cooking breakfast for each other once a week, sharing that rotation with their sister, trying to lessen their loneliness imposed by the doors of death.

Death separates "the spirit and the body [which] are the soul of man" (D&C 88:15). That separation evokes pangs of sorrow and shock among those left behind. The hurt is real. Only its intensity varies. Some doors are heavier than others. The sense of tragedy may be related to age. Generally the younger the victim, the greater the grief. Yet even when the elderly or

infirm have been afforded merciful relief, their loved ones are rarely ready to let go. The only length of life that seems to satisfy the longings of the human heart is life everlasting.

Mourning

Irrespective of age, we mourn for those loved and lost. Mourning is one of the deepest expressions of pure love. It is a natural response in complete accord with divine commandment: "Thou shalt live together in love, insomuch that thou shalt weep for the loss of them that die" (D&C 42:45).

Moreover, we can't fully appreciate joyful reunions later without tearful separations now. The only way to take sorrow out of death is to take love out of life.

Eternal perspective

Eternal perspective provides peace "which passeth all understanding" (Philippians 4:7). In speaking at a funeral of a loved one, the Prophet

Joseph Smith offered this admonition: "When we lose a near and dear friend, upon whom we have set our hearts, it should be a caution unto us. . . . Our affections should be placed upon God and His work, more intensely than upon our fellow beings" (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, sel. Joseph Fielding Smith [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1938], p. 216).

Life does not begin with birth, nor does it end with death. Prior to our birth, we dwelled as spirit children with our Father in Heaven. There we eagerly anticipated the possibility of coming to earth and obtaining a physical body. Knowingly we wanted the risks of mortality, which would allow the exercise of agency and accountability. "This life [was to become] a probationary state; a time to prepare to meet God" (Alma 12:24). But we regarded the returning home as the best part of that long-awaited trip, just as we do now. Before embarking on any journey, we like to have some assurance of a round-trip ticket. Returning from earth to life in our heavenly home requires passage through—and not around—the doors of death. We were born to die, and we die to live (see 2 Corinthians 6:9). As seedlings of God, we barely blossom on earth; we fully flower in heaven.

Physical death

The writer of Ecclesiastes said, "To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven: A time to be born, and a time to die" (Ecclesiastes 3:1–2; see also Alma 12:27).

Think of the alternative. If all 69 billion people who have ever lived on earth were still here, imagine the traffic jam! And we could own virtually nothing and scarcely make any responsible decisions.

Plan of happiness

Scriptures teach that death is *essential* to happiness: "Now behold, it was not expedient that man should be reclaimed from this temporal death, for that would *destroy* the great plan of happiness" (Alma 42:8; italics added; see also 2 Nephi 9:6).

Our limited perspective would be enlarged if we could witness the reunion on the other side of the veil, when doors of death open to those returning home. Such was the vision of the psalmist who wrote, "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints" (Psalm 116:15).

Spiritual death

But there is another type of separation known in scripture as spiritual death (see 2 Nephi 9:12; Alma 12:16; 42:9; Helaman 14:16, 18). It "is defined as a *state of spiritual alienation from God*" (Joseph Fielding Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation*, comp. Bruce R. McConkie, 3 vols. [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1954–56], 2:217). Thus, one can be very much alive physically but dead spiritually.

Spiritual death is more likely when goals are unbalanced toward things physical. Paul explained this concept to the Romans: "If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live" (Romans 8:13).

If physical death should strike before moral wrongs have been made right, opportunity for repentance will have been forfeited. Thus, "the [real] sting of death is sin" (1 Corinthians 15:56).

Even the Savior cannot save us in our sins. He will redeem us from our sins, but only upon condition of our repentance. We are responsible for our own spiritual survival or death (see Romans 8:13–14; Helaman 14:18; D&C 29:41–45).

Coping with trials

Physical and spiritual trials provide continuing challenges in life. Each of you could provide illustrations from personal experience. Many of you, for instance, are at the twilight of life and endure long and difficult days. You know well the meaning of that divine injunction to endure to the end (see Matthew 24:13; Mark 13:13; 1 Nephi 13:37; 22:31; 2 Nephi 31:16; 33:4; Omni 1:26; 3 Nephi 15:9; D&C 14:7; 18:22; 24:8).

The Savior of the world repeatedly asked that we pattern our lives after His (see John 13:15; 14:6; 1 Peter 2:21; 2 Nephi 31:9, 16; 3 Nephi 18:16; 27:27). So we must endure trials—as did He. “Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered” (Hebrews 5:8).

When hardship heaps its heavy load upon us, good may yet be gleaned. Shakespeare so wrote:

Sweet are the uses of adversity,
Which, like the toad, ugly and venomous,
Wears yet a precious jewel in his head.
[*As You Like It*, act 2, scene 1, lines 12–14]

The Lord’s expression is even more explicit: “After much tribulation come the blessings” (D&C 58:4).

Postmortal life

Mortality, temporary as it is, is terminated by the doors of death. Questions then come to searching minds of those left behind: “Where is my loved one now?” “What happens after death?” While many questions cannot be fully answered with available knowledge, much is known.

Paradise

The first station in postmortal life is named paradise. Alma wrote:

“Concerning the state of the soul between death and the resurrection—Behold, it has been made known unto me . . . that the spirits of all men, as soon as they are departed from this mortal body, . . . are taken home to that God who gave them life.

“ . . . The spirits of those who are righteous are received into a state of happiness, which is called paradise, a state of rest, a state of peace” (Alma 40:11–12).

Resurrection and immortality

Some facetiously state that nothing is as permanent as death. Not so! The grip of physical death is temporary. It began with the fall of Adam; it ended with the atonement of Jesus the Christ. The waiting period in paradise is temporary too. It ends with the Resurrection. From the Book of Mormon we learn that the “paradise of God must deliver up the spirits of the righteous, and the grave deliver up the body of the righteous; and the spirit and the body is restored to itself again, and all men become incorruptible, and immortal, and they are living souls” (2 Nephi 9:13).

A few years ago our stake president and his wife had a wonderful son taken in his youthful prime because of an automobile accident. We are consoled by the knowledge that the very laws that could not allow his broken body to survive here are the same eternal laws which the Lord will employ at the time of the Resurrection, when that body “shall be restored to [its] proper and perfect frame” (Alma 40:23; see also 11:42–45).

The Lord who created us in the first place surely has power to do it again. The same necessary elements

now in our bodies will still be available—at His command. The same unique genetic code now embedded in each of our living cells will still be available to format new ones then. The miracle of the Resurrection, wondrous as it will be, is marvelously matched by the miracle of our creation in the first place.

Judgment

Our resurrection will not be an end but a new beginning. It will prepare us for judgment by the Lord, who said, "As I have been lifted up [upon the cross] by men even so should men be lifted up by the Father, to stand before me, to be judged of their works" (3 Nephi 27:14).

Even before we approach that threshold of the eternal court of justice, we know who will personally preside:

"The keeper of the gate is the Holy One of Israel; and he employeth no servant there; and there is none other way save it be by the gate; for he cannot be deceived, for the Lord God is his name.

"And whoso knocketh, to him will he open" (2 Nephi 9:41–42).

Family ties

Loving relationships continue beyond the doors of death and judgment. Family ties endure because of sealings in the temple. Their importance cannot be overstated.

I remember vividly an experience I had as a passenger in a small two-propeller airplane. One of its engines suddenly burst open and caught on fire. The propeller of the flaming engine was starkly stilled. As we plummeted in a steep spiral dive toward the earth, I expected to die. Some of the passengers screamed in hysterical panic. Miraculously, the precipitous dive extinguished the flames. Then, by starting up the other engine, the pilot was

able to stabilize the plane and bring us down safely.

Throughout that ordeal, though I "knew" death was coming, my paramount feeling was that I was not afraid to die. I remember a sense of returning home to meet ancestors for whom I had done temple work. I remember my deep sense of gratitude that my sweetheart and I had been sealed eternally to each other and to our children, born and reared in the covenant. I realized that our marriage in the temple was my most important accomplishment. Honors bestowed upon me by men could not approach the inner peace provided by sealings performed in the house of the Lord.

That harrowing experience consumed but a few minutes, yet my entire life flashed before my mind. Having had such rapid recall when facing death, I do not doubt the scriptural promise of "perfect remembrance" when facing judgment (Alma 5:18; see also Alma 11:43).

Eternal life

After judgment comes the possibility of eternal life—the kind of life that our Heavenly Father lives. His celestial realm has been compared with the glory of the sun (see 1 Corinthians 15:41; D&C 76:96). It is available to all who prepare for it, the requirements of which have been clearly revealed: "Ye must press forward with a steadfastness in Christ, having a perfect brightness of hope, and a love of God and of all men. Wherefore, if ye shall press forward, feasting upon the word of Christ, and endure to the end, behold, thus saith the Father: Ye shall have eternal life" (2 Nephi 31:20; see also John 17:3).

Time to prepare

Meanwhile, we who tarry here have a few precious moments remaining "to prepare to meet God" (Alma

34:32). Unfinished business is our worst business. Perpetual procrastination must yield to perceptive preparation. Today we have a little more time to bless others—time to be kinder, more compassionate, quicker to thank and slower to scold, more generous in sharing, more gracious in caring.

Then when our turn comes to pass through the doors of death, we can say as did Paul: "The time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith" (2 Timothy 4:6-7).

We need not look upon death as an enemy. With our full understanding and preparation, faith supplants fear. Hope displaces despair. The Lord said, "Fear not even unto death; for in this world your joy is not full, but in me your joy is full" (D&C 101:36). He bestowed this gift: "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid" (John 14:27).

As a special witness of Jesus Christ, I testify that He lives! I also testify that the veil of death is very thin. I know by experiences too sacred to

relate that those who have gone before are not strangers to leaders of this Church. To us and to you, our loved ones may be just as close as the next room—separated only by the doors of death.

With that assurance, brothers and sisters, love life! Cherish each moment as a blessing from God (see Mosiah 2:21). Live it well—even to your loftiest potential. Then the anticipation of death shall not hold you hostage. With the help of the Lord, your deeds and desires will qualify you to receive everlasting joy, glory, immortality, and eternal lives. For this I pray in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Monson

Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Council of the Twelve has just spoken to us.

We shall now hear from Elder M. Russell Ballard, also a member of the Council of the Twelve. He will be followed by Sister Ardeth G. Kapp, released yesterday as General President of the Young Women.

Elder M. Russell Ballard

Sacrifices of pioneers

Last October we listened to many inspired conference messages. In his Sunday morning address, President Gordon B. Hinckley called to our attention some of the poignant experiences of our pioneer forefathers whose sacrifices helped them lay the foundation of the restored Church. Our hearts were softened and our spirits grew tender with emotion as we listened to him recount experiences of some of those hardy handcart pioneers.

The images engendered in my mind and heart have not left me. Again and again, I find my thoughts returning

to the high, snow-covered, windswept plains of Wyoming. In my mind's eye, I see the suffering of those faithful Saints and know that in their extremity, under circumstances hard for us today to conceive, many of them came to know God in a way that few people will ever understand.

Margaret McNeil Ballard

Many of us are descendants of hardy pioneers, and we feel grateful and inspired by their faith-promoting examples of sacrifice. My great-grandmother Margaret McNeil Ballard recorded in her journal a pioneer expe-

rience of sacrifice that occurred when she was between nine and eleven years of age. She wrote:

"After landing we planned to go west to Utah with the Martin and Wiley handcart companies; but Elder Franklin D. Richards counseled my father not to go with them. Afterwards, we were very thankful because of the great suffering, privation and cold weather to which these people were subjected. There were many of the company who were frozen that year on their journey. . . .

"The company we were assigned to had gone on ahead and as my mother was anxious for me to go with them she strapped my little brother James on my back with a shawl. He was only four years old and . . . quite sick with the measles; but I took him since my mother had all she could do to care for the other children. I hurried and caught up with the company, traveling with them all day. That night a kind lady helped me take my brother off my back. I sat up and held him on my lap with the shawl wrapped around him, alone, all night. He was a little better in the morning. The people in the camp were very good to us and gave us a little fried bacon and some bread for breakfast.

"We traveled this way for about a week, before my brother and I were united with our family again."

This brief episode in Great-grandmother's life teaches me that our pioneer ancestors gave everything, even their lives, for their faith, for the building of the kingdom of God when the Church was in its infancy. It teaches also that they helped, nourished, and strengthened each other in their extremity and shared unstintingly. Their material means, such as food, clothing, and shelter, were meager, but their love for one another and their devotion to their Lord and to the gospel were boundless.

Our sacrifices

Our commitment to the kingdom should match that of our faithful ancestors even though our sacrifices are different. They were driven from comfortable homes and compelled to journey one thousand miles by ox-drawn wagon and handcart to reestablish their families, homes, and Church in safety. Our sacrifices may be more subtle but no less demanding. Instead of physical deprivation and hardship, we face the challenge of remaining true and faithful to gospel principles amidst such evil and destructive forces as dishonesty, corruption, drug and alcohol misuse, and disease often caused by sexual promiscuity. Also, we find ourselves in combat daily with immorality in all of its many forms. Pornography and violence, often portrayed in insidious television shows, movies, and videos, are running rampant. Hate and envy, greed and selfishness are all about us, and families are disintegrating at an ever-increasing pace. In the midst of all of this, my brothers and sisters, we must never forget the source of our abundant blessings.

Sacrifices for a ward building

I recall in my own ministry joining with members of the Holladay Seventh Ward in the spring of 1956 as we gathered on the hillside near Mount Olympus. Under the direction of our stake president, G. Carlos Smith, we broke ground for the construction of a new ward building. At the time the ward was created, we had a total of 373 members. As I recall, more than half of them were under the age of twelve. I served as second counselor to Bishop William Partridge. Under his leadership this little band of people proceeded immediately to build a three-phase ward building.

The ward was divided in 1958, and I was named bishop of the Holladay

Twelfth Ward. In those days, local members paid 50 percent of the cost of constructing a building. One of the most important leadership experiences in my life came several weeks before the announced dedication of the building. Our ward of young families, who were struggling to make ends meet, needed to raise the final \$30,000 required to pay our share of the cost. I fasted and prayed, asking for help from Heavenly Father to know what I should say to our ward members regarding this obligation. We already had pressed them very hard, and they had willingly contributed money and personal labor beyond anything I believed possible. But still we needed to raise the last \$30,000.

As the brethren gathered for priesthood meeting, I was impressed to read to them the testimony my Grandfather Ballard bore to the First Presidency and the Council of the Twelve on January 7, 1919, the day he was ordained an Apostle. I quote just a small portion of his testimony.

"I know, as I know that I live, that this is God's work and that you are His servants. . . . I remember one testimony, among the many testimonies which I have received. . . . Two years ago, about this time, I had been on the Fort Peck Reservation for several days with the brethren, solving the problems connected with our work among the Lamanites. Many questions arose that we had to settle. There was no precedent for us to follow, and we just had to go to the Lord and tell Him our troubles, and get inspiration and help from Him. On this occasion I had sought the Lord, under such circumstances, and that night I received a wonderful manifestation and impression which has never left me. I was carried to this place—into this room. I saw myself here with you. I was told there was another privilege that was to be mine; and I was led into a room

where I was informed I was to meet someone. As I entered the room I saw, seated on a raised platform, the most glorious being I have ever conceived of, and was taken forward to be introduced to Him. As I approached He smiled, called my name, and stretched out His hands toward me. If I live to be a million years old I shall never forget that smile. He put His arms around me and kissed me, as He took me into His bosom, and He blessed me until my whole being was thrilled. As He finished I fell at His feet, and there saw the marks of the nails; and as I kissed them, with deep joy swelling through my whole being, I felt that I was in heaven indeed. The feeling that came to my heart then was: Oh! if I could live worthy, though it would require four-score years, so that in the end when I have finished I could go into His presence and receive the feeling that I *then* had in His presence, I would give everything that I am or ever hope to be!" (*Melvin J. Ballard—Crusader for Righteousness* [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1966], pp. 65–66).

The Spirit of the Lord touched our hearts. Very little else was said because this small group of faithful people also knew in their own way that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and that He is our Savior and our Redeemer. We all knew that with greater faith in Him, we could reach our goal. During that same day, family after family came to my office with money, making personal sacrifices that were far beyond what I, the bishop, would ever have asked of them. By eight o'clock Sunday evening, the ward clerk had written receipts for a little more than \$30,000.

Sacrifice truly brought forth the blessings of heaven to the members of our ward. Never have I lived among people who were more united, more caring, more concerned for one another than these ward members were when making their greatest sacrifice. In

the midst of this effort, the sick of our ward were healed through priesthood blessings. The youth committed to live righteously. The young men set their goals to be fully worthy to serve missions, and most of them did; and the young women resolved to settle for nothing but a worthy temple marriage. Sisters of the Relief Society found great joy in rendering compassionate service to others, and home teaching and visiting teaching were completed every month in the spirit of joy and service. In the midst of our greatest sacrifice, our ward members became bonded together in the true spirit of the gospel of love and service.

The Lord's example of sacrifice

Sacrifice is a demonstration of pure love. The degree of our love for the Lord, for the gospel, and for our fellowmen can be measured by what we are willing to sacrifice for them. Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ manifested the supreme example of this love. His life and ministry established a pattern for us to follow. His divine mission was culminated in a supreme act of love as He allowed His life to be sacrificed for us. Having power over life and death, He chose to submit himself to pain, ridicule, and suffering, and offered His life as a ransom for our sins. Because of His love, He suffered both body and spirit to a degree beyond our comprehension and took upon Himself our sins if we repent. Through His personal sacrifice, He provided a way for us to have our sins forgiven and, through Him, to find our way back into the presence of our Heavenly Father.

The sacrifice he requires of us is "a broken heart and a contrite spirit" (3 Nephi 9:20), which can lead us to repentance. When we consider His example, the demands made upon our time or means are slight in comparison.

We should, therefore, give gladly and count it as a blessing and an opportunity.

Do not lose the spirit of sacrifice

I realize that today many faithful members of the Church are sacrificing a great deal to support sons and daughters serving on missions and render other great service in many ways. As I have pondered these simple acts of faith, I have asked myself, however, how many of us really measure up to our potential in living the spirit of the law of sacrifice?

Church members today have been blessed greatly to have some of our financial burdens lifted. Faithful payment of tithes that are administered carefully now provides funds for constructing our buildings, paying for utilities, and meeting many other obligations that formerly necessitated additional contributions. We must realize that decreasing these needs for financial contributions gives birth to enlarged opportunities for us to live a higher law. By this I mean that on our own initiative we can find ways to extend ourselves in helping others and contributing to the building of the Lord's kingdom. The Lord has instructed us that we "should be anxiously engaged in a good cause, and do many things of [our] own free will, and bring to pass much righteousness; For the power is in [us], wherein [we] are agents unto [ourselves]" (D&C 58:27-28).

My brothers and sisters, we must not lose the spirit of sacrifice demonstrated by the handcart pioneers. Some of the Lord's choicest blessings await those who practice this eternal principle through extending themselves in service to God and to their fellowmen. The sacrificing spirit and the happiness that come through service to others can bring peace and joy even amid trials.

Teach sacrifice in every home

The principle of sacrifice should be taught in every Latter-day Saint home and should be practiced in many simple yet important ways. We can do this by setting an example of reverence that will bring the true spirit of worship into our meetings and by guarding against murmuring and complaining about the challenges of the Sunday worship schedule. We can contribute a generous fast offering, find joy in supporting missionaries, and pay an honest tithing. We can accept Church callings and serve with a happy and grateful heart, do temple work regularly, offer family and personal daily prayers, and teach one another each week in well-planned family home evenings. Both younger members and those who are older can prepare early and make themselves worthy to accept calls to serve as missionaries. We all can be good neighbors and can take care of widows, the poor, and the less fortunate. We can reach out to others in our service as home and visiting teachers. Brethren, we must be clean and worthy to bless others with the priesthood we hold.

Today we are not called to pull handcarts through the snow-swept

plains of Wyoming. However, we are called to live, foster, and teach the gospel of Jesus Christ. It is our privilege to invest our means and our time to bless others. Each one of us must do all we can to preserve our Latter-day Saint way of life. A vital part of this preservation is a willingness to set aside personal desires and replace them with unselfish sacrifice for others.

God bless you, brothers and sisters, to know as I know that God lives, that Jesus is the Christ, and that being a member of His Church, the only true and living Church, is never a burden but always a great blessing. That we may be grateful for this blessing I pray humbly in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Monson

We have just heard from Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Council of the Twelve.

Sister Ardeth G. Kapp, who was released yesterday as Young Women General President, will now address us. She will be followed by Sister Janette C. Hales, sustained yesterday as General President of the Young Women.

Ardeth G. Kapp

My dear brothers and sisters, today my heart is filled with joy because of the deep love and respect I feel for the newly called Young Women Presidency. I also feel heartfelt gratitude for my counselors and the Young Women board members I have served with. We rejoice in the opportunities that have come through our callings. I'm grateful to my eternal companion, who has been my constant support.

A mighty force for righteousness

As we have inquired of the Lord in earnest prayer and sought Him diligently, we have felt His Spirit and witnessed His guiding hand. I bear testimony of the wisdom, inspiration, and guidance of our priesthood leaders directing this great work.

At the time of my calling, President Hinckley spoke of this as a time when the young women of the Church would become a mighty force for

righteousness. We are witnessing this around the world.

A young fifteen-year-old from Zaire, Africa, wrote, "I know my Heavenly Father loves me because I have asked."

Another young woman wrote: "I am almost fourteen. I want to know if you think it is all right to go to the school dances. If you don't answer my letter in time for the Halloween dance, I won't go. I don't want to disobey."

Behind these righteous young women are loving parents and faithful leaders who sense the sacred trust to teach, to love, to hold a hand, and, when appropriate, to hold the line.

Knowing who we are

In *Fiddler on the Roof*, Tevye speaks to his daughters and says: In Anatevka "everyone here knows who [she] is and what God expects [of her]" (Jerry Bauch, "Tradition," *Fiddler on the Roof* [New York: Sunbeam Music, 1971]).

It is important for all of us to know who we are and what God expects of us.

After Jesus had fasted forty days, the tempter came to Him and attempted to plant seeds of doubt about who He really was. "If thou be the Son of God," he began his evil ploy (Matthew 4:3). Jesus knew who He was. He has declared that message clearly to each of us: "Behold, I am Jesus Christ, the Son of God!" (D&C 6:21). He is our Savior, our advocate with the Father.

The young women of the Church have a personal statement which declares their identity: "I am a daughter of a Heavenly Father who loves me, and I will have faith in his eternal plan, which centers in Jesus Christ, my Savior" (*Young Women Handbook* [1989], p. 3).

Each of us, young and older, through the ordinance of baptism has covenanted to take upon us the name

of Jesus Christ, to love, to care, and to serve our brothers and sisters wherever they may be.

A few weeks ago I was speaking at a missionary fireside where members had brought their nonmember friends. I noticed a young girl sitting by her mother on the front row. I learned later that she was only twelve years old. I asked her if she would come up. She could hardly see over the pulpit. Unrehearsed, this young girl, with great feeling and conviction in her tender yet clear voice, repeated from memory:

"We are daughters of our Heavenly Father who loves us, and we love him. We will 'stand as witnesses of God at all times and in all things, and in all places'" (*Young Women Handbook*, p. 3).

She continued to the end of the Young Women Theme, including the Young Women Values, while the audience listened in awe.

Knowing and remembering who we are and whose we are, we become guided by a force affecting our attitude and our conduct. We draw close to our Father in Heaven through sacred ordinances and covenants available only through His restored Church.

Making and keeping covenants

I had the privilege of visiting with a faithful family of Latter-day Saints in a small nipa hut in the Philippines. In this humble setting a beautiful young woman, fourteen years old, listened intently while her father explained that by saving all the money they could and selling everything they owned, the family would one day have enough to go to the temple, where they could be sealed as a family forever.

It is our faith in the importance of making covenants with God and coming to understand our immense possibilities that the temple, the house of the Lord, becomes the focus for all that really matters. In the temple we

participate in ordinances and covenants that span the distance between heaven and earth. They prepare us to one day return to God's presence and enjoy the blessings of eternal families and eternal life.

I have heard young women around the world repeat in many languages their commitment: "We will be prepared to make and keep sacred covenants, receive the ordinances of the temple, and enjoy the blessings of exaltation" (*Young Women Handbook*, p. 3). Those blessings can be available to all of us—to all our Father's children. When our faith is centered in Jesus Christ, our Savior, we begin to understand our identity and our tender rela-

tionship to Him as expressed in the song:

The King of love my Shepherd is,
Whose goodness faileth never;
I nothing lack if I am His,
And He is mine forever.
[Henry W. Baker, "The King of Love," in *Masterpieces of Religious Verse* (New York: Harper, 1948), no. 783]

It is through the ordinances and covenants available in the temple that our Father in Heaven has provided the way for us to return to Him rejoicing. To these eternal truths I bear my testimony in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Janette C. Hales

You are not alone

How I love Ardeth Kapp and Jayne Malan and the recently released board members. And what a wonderful feeling came over me when President Monson called to tell me that my counselors had been called. He said, "You shouldn't be alone." And then he quickly added, "You are not alone."

I have a testimony of those words and what comfort they give. Four years ago, when I found myself quite suddenly a widow with the youngest of my five children leaving for a mission, I felt alone. I did a lot of walking at that time, and one day I told a neighbor I found myself thinking about youth. She said, "Really? I wonder why?" I concluded that perhaps I was trying to remember who I was before I was married. I said, "If I ever have a chance to work with young people again, I will be so much more patient, so much more gentle, and so much more loving." And I have since added, "I will do all in my power to encourage young people to prepare for the future."

Study, pray, and listen

There are times when we are growing up when we feel alone or left out. Times of change are growing-up times: things like moving, changing schools, going on a mission, having a baby, having your baby go on a mission, a serious illness, losing someone you love. I believe that there are some things that help in these growing-up times so we don't feel so alone. Spend more time talking to Heavenly Father and reading the scriptures. Listen to the still, small voice. In the words of a young woman of Beehive age: "At first when I would say my prayers and read scriptures, I would never get a good feeling about it. But after about two months of my scriptures and prayer, I began to feel very happy, and I loved my family, and I felt like being nice to everyone."

When the prophet Enos listened to the words of the Lord, he began to feel a desire for the welfare of others (see Enos 1:9). When we start to think of others, we feel less alone.

Build a support system

Another thing that helps is to build a support system. As a president needs counselors, we all need caring and interested family and friends. A father said to his daughter: "Somebody does care about you. It may not always be the people you want to have caring about you, but there is always someone who is there and who cares. In fact, you probably already know who they are because they are the ones you have always been able to count on. That won't change" (Joseph Walker, "Value-Speak," *Chicago Tribune*, 3 June 1991). We need people who care. "Thy friends do stand by thee, and they shall hail thee again with warm hearts and friendly hands" (D&C 121:9).

Work and gain experience

Growing up does not take place without a work effort. Not long ago, my youngest daughter came home and said her bishop had asked her to be a Sunday School teacher. She said, "I just don't feel like a Sunday School teacher." I said, "You aren't yet, Mary, but you will be." Growing up involves developing our potential. Heavenly Father is counting on each one of us. Confidence will grow quietly from within as we work and gain experience.

Enjoy doing small, unseen deeds

Sometimes we make the mistake of feeling we are alone just because we are not getting recognition. Only a small part of what we do takes place in a public setting. The rest takes place in small and often unseen deeds. When you add the small deeds together, however, they are a thousand times greater than those receiving public recognition. Albert Schweitzer said that when you compare the public deeds to the small, private ones, they are "like the foam on the waves of a deep ocean"

(Albert Schweitzer, *Out of My Life and Thought*, trans. A. B. Lemke [New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1990], p. 90). This is a good thing to remember when growing up.

Many people love you

To every young woman of the Church, in your growing-up years you are not alone. I want you to know how much I love you. Do you have any idea how much you are thought about, talked about, prayed about, and loved by your parents and leaders? Learn to work and develop your abilities. Consider the needs of others and give loving service. Support one another as you stand for truth and righteousness. Our Heavenly Father loves you. He understands your challenges. He knows you were prepared for this time before you were born. I have complete faith in the words of our prophet, who said, "You have been born at this time for a sacred and glorious purpose" (Ezra Taft Benson, "To the Young Women of the Church," *Ensign*, Nov. 1986, p. 81).

Adults, know and love the youth

Now, to every adult member of the Church, may I suggest that you learn the names of the young people in your ward or branch and call them by name. Encourage them in their work efforts. Recognize them for the good things they do. They need our support, and we need theirs. Probably the hardest thing about growing up is that you have to keep doing it. But we are not alone. I bear testimony and express gratitude for this knowledge in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Monson

The young women of the Church have been well served by Sister Ardeth Kapp and her counselors, Jayne B. Malan and Janette C. Hales. Sister Kapp, of course, will join her husband,

Heber, when he presides over the Canada Vancouver Mission. You can always feel her missionary spirit. And of course we feel wonderfully well about the young women being in the charge of Sister Janette C. Hales, from whom we've just heard, and her counselors, Virginia H. Pearce and Patricia P. Pinegar.

The choir and congregation will now join in singing "We Thank Thee,

O God, for a Prophet." Elder Han In Sang, who was sustained as a member of the Seventy at October conference, will then speak to us.

The choir and congregation sang "We Thank Thee, O God, for a Prophet."

Elder Han In Sang

A disciple of the Lord

I feel deeply humble, and I sincerely pray for the Spirit and for support from the Lord.

From the book of 3 Nephi we read: "Behold, I am a disciple of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. I have been called of him to declare his word among his people, that they might have everlasting life" (3 Nephi 5:13).

I came from Korea, traveling halfway around the world to bear my testimony of the truthfulness of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Korea has experienced wars. During my lifetime I have seen many tragic things, sadness, and changes. Yet I have also witnessed many miracles. My country of Korea is where I was born and where I have lived all my life. It is where my beloved ancestors, including my dear father and mother and the parents of my grandparents, are buried.

Four of our five children are in Korea now. Many of our close friends and our brothers and sisters and their families are there also.

I have never lived outside Korea until last August, when I was called to Salt Lake City, called by the Lord to declare His words among His people.

Yet the First Presidency counseled me to become a General Authority, a disciple of the Lord first, above all things.

Gratitude to Heavenly Father

Before I've gone too far, let me say, "*Kam sa ham ni ta!*" *Kam sa ham ni ta* is a unique Korean honorific expression of gratitude.

I am grateful to Heavenly Father for His love and special blessings in my life. During the desperate times of difficulties and throughout the war, I wandered to the very edge of my life and felt most helpless. There was no hope and no future for me. I thought I had been completely thrown out and left out by everything.

Heavenly Father, through my loving parents, worked out miracles for me. I was able to stand up and move forward. The shelters and food were provided here and there. It wasn't much, but enough for me to keep going and ultimately to join with you today in this historic great Tabernacle, surrounded by the chosen leaders of the Lord's Church.

Thus I say, "*Kam sa ham ni ta*" to my Heavenly Father.

Gratitude to Dr. Kim Ho Jik

I am grateful for my good parents and for their special love and wonderful influence on my life. I am also deeply grateful to Dr. Kim Ho Jik, the first Korean Latter-day Saint, the most

humble and unselfish person I have ever known. This great man led the handful of poverty-stricken young Korean Saints during the time of tribulation to lay the foundation of the work of the Lord in the land of morning calm—Korea—by preparing those seemingly helpless individuals to learn the gospel of Jesus Christ and to stand firm for the cause of the Lord.

His love of God and his love for me formulated many miracles in my life.

I set my goal to become a good member of the Church as he was—a good father, a good husband, and even a good translator as he was. I know that today he and my father are looking down and smiling at me from the spirit world.

Gratitude to members and leaders

I am grateful for you, my brothers and sisters. *Kam sa ham ni ta!*

One of you taught me the restored gospel of Jesus Christ and baptized me into the kingdom. The love you had moved me to accept the gospel to begin with. Then many great leaders of the Church came over to teach and train us all these years.

President Lee, President Kimball, President Benson, President Hinckley, President Monson, and many other great leaders came to help us and change us, with great love of the Lord.

In Korea, President Hinckley wept many times, and we all felt the love he had for the Lord and for the poor people in the Orient. *Kam sa ham ni ta!*

The costs of discipleship

When we left our home in Korea last fall, many of our brothers and sisters came to KimPo Airport to say good-bye to us. Four of our children were also among the people, half lost and half crying. They were so proud of their parents. On that particular day, my wife and I stood on the side of the

departure lounge away from the area where we normally stood, where we had seen our guests off.

KimPo Airport—I know that place very well. I have gone there numerous times, primarily to bring visitors in and to accompany guests out. Each time I visited KimPo Airport, I would say to myself or to my wife, “Not me! Never! I will do their errands for them. I will drive for them and translate for them and all the rest. But no, sir! I will stay home and be a good Gospel Doctrine class teacher in Sunday School!” Thus, the Lord heard my selfish whispering.

Elder Maxwell, you taught us about the reality of the costs of discipleship. Further, you said, “They can be paid neither at wholesale rates nor in one lump sum” (*Men and Women of Christ* [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1991], p. 24).

I had to learn the lesson very quickly, and I am grateful for the counsel and encouragement of the message.

We are now living in Tokyo, Japan. Only the Lord knows why. In Tokyo we have to learn everything all over again, including the new meaning of life. We have to learn the language, the culture, the system of the society, how to commute from one place to another, and, importantly, we are learning about the people and how to love these people.

In the book of Mark we read, “Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me” (Mark 8:34).

Bearing this cross is not easy, but it will not be too difficult because God lives and He loves us.

The love of God

I meet many tired leaders here and there in our area. I hug them and tell them I love them because I have a strong testimony of the living God and His great love.

To me, the love of God means going out to the people and doing something good for them and helping them until they change their old ways of living and come to Heavenly Father, happily.

Only the love of God will cure many diseases and problems of the world, including the disease of inactivity in the Church.

May that love of God bring peace in your homes. I love you, and *Kam sa ham ni ta!* I know that God our Heavenly Father lives and that Jesus Christ is our Savior. Joseph Smith was a true

prophet of the Lord in this dispensation, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Monson

Wasn't that a beautiful expression, brothers and sisters? Elder Han In Sang of the Seventy has just spoken to us.

We shall now be pleased to hear from Elders Stephen D. Naudauld and Sam K. Shimabukuro, who were also sustained as members of the Seventy at the October conference.

Elder Stephen D. Naudauld

It is a humbling experience to occupy this podium where truths of the Restoration have been taught by prophets and Apostles both past and present. I am grateful for this call to serve and have come to admire and love the Brethren with whom I associate.

I am indebted to a wonderful and able mother and a truly extraordinary wife, companion, and mother to our seven sons. I echo a sentiment previously expressed by Elder Scott—Margaret excels me in every worthwhile quality. I love her very much.

Running into ourselves

Children can provide wonderful and often humorous insights into life. We have in our family identical ten-year-old twin sons. In some circumstances they are practically impossible to tell apart.

Recently we moved and found ourselves in new surroundings. Several days later I was talking to Aaron, one of the twins, and inquired about the big bump he had on his forehead. He described it this way. "Well, Dad, Lincoln [who is his older brother] was chasing me down the hall. I ran around the cor-

ner, and I saw my twin brother, Adam. Now, I knew I could outrun Adam, so I just kept running." It turns out he ran into a full-length mirror!

Life provides for each of us a full-length, wide-screen panorama of opportunities to run into ourselves. The eminent philosopher Pogo expressed it this way: "We have met the enemy, and he is us!" (Walt Kelly).

In more eloquent terms, Moroni was told by the Lord: "And if men come unto me I will show unto them their weakness . . . ; for if they humble themselves before me, and have faith in me, then will I make weak things become strong unto them" (Ether 12:27).

Overcoming weaknesses through faith

As we look into the mirror at the accumulation of bumps and bruises that evidence our weaknesses, may we be reminded that there are two great stabilizing forces that can anchor our souls.

The first is illustrated by an experience of several months ago. A stake president and I took the opportunity to visit a young woman in her home near

Atlanta, Georgia. She was twenty-nine years old; her husband had been killed in a car accident; she was living in a modest apartment with her two young children. I suppose we expected to find her upset and discouraged at having received a "bump" not of her own making. On the contrary, she was cheerful; she was calm; she was very gracious. She thanked us for coming and then said, as nearly as I can recall:

"Brethren, I want you to know I believe in the plan of redemption. I am grateful to my Savior for the promise of a glorious resurrection with my husband. I am grateful for His redeeming sacrifice." Then, putting her arms around her two children, she said, "Our faith in Jesus Christ will see us through."

We came expecting to comfort and strengthen, and we left humbled, buoyed, and blessed by her wonderful expression of faith.

Indeed we walk by faith—faith in the plan of redemption, faith in the role of Jesus Christ as Savior and Redeemer, faith that as the Son of God he has the power to save, to forgive, to lift us up. Because of our faith, we repent, we keep his commandments, we seek his restored Church and authorized priesthood. We listen to and follow the words of his prophets and Apostles spoken from this and other pulpits.

When we exercise our faith in him, then Christ will help us overcome our weaknesses and the resulting bumps and bruises.

Carol's example of good works

To illustrate the second great stabilizing force, I would relate another experience. Some years ago I was serving as a young bishop. We were holding a ward social around a swimming pool near the apartment where most of the ward members lived. I was introduced to a new member of the ward, a young woman in her twenties by the name of

Carol. Carol had been afflicted with cerebral palsy since infancy. She walked with great difficulty; her hands were crippled. Her kind and dear face was also affected, as was her speech. But, as I would come to understand, to know Carol was to love her.

I had only to wait a few minutes to begin learning the great lesson she would teach. While we were talking, we watched a tall, handsome, dark-haired, very athletic young man dive off the diving board and seem to injure himself slightly. He got out of the pool holding his neck and went and sat under a tree. I watched as Carol struggled to prepare a plate of food and with great difficulty delivered it to him—a guileless act of service, of good works. Carol's good works became a legend. She cared for the sick; she took food to the hungry; she drove people places (an experience that delivered you pale and shaken but always in one piece); she comforted; she lifted; she blessed.

I walked with her one day on the sidewalk that passed through the apartment complex where she lived. From the windows, from the balconies, from the porches came cries of "Hi, Carol!" "How are you doing, Carol?" "Come up and see us, Carol." And occasionally someone would say, "Oh, hi, Bishop." It was clear that Carol was loved and greatly accepted through her wonderful good works.

My most vivid recollection of Carol occurred in the spring of that year. The ward had agreed to participate in the stake five-kilometer fun run—an oxymoronic term, to be sure. Carol wanted to be with the rest of the ward members, but we didn't see how it would be possible. For her, just walking was a great difficulty. Nevertheless, she was determined. She struggled and trained each day to increase her endurance.

The race finished in the stadium. Two or three hundred of us were in the

stands by the finish line, drinking juice and catching our breath. And then we remembered Carol—she was left somewhere back on the course. As we ran out of the entrance to the stadium, she came into view, struggling to breathe, barely able to walk, but determined to finish. As she started around the track toward the finish line, a wonderful thing happened. Suddenly the track was lined on both sides with hundreds of cheering friends. Others were running alongside to support and hold her up. Carol “of great good works” had finished the race.

One day each of us will cross the finish line. Will it likewise be to the

cheers and encouragement of those we have loved and served? Hopefully it will be to the approbation of our Savior, who because of our faith and our good works will say, “Well done, thou good and faithful servant” (Matthew 25:21).

I add my witness to the many that have been borne from this pulpit. I know God lives. Jesus Christ is his Son, our Savior and our Redeemer. He has the power to lift us up if we will come unto him in faith, with good works, and with all of our hearts. I so testify in the sacred name of Jesus Christ, amen.

Elder Sam K. Shimabukuro

Greetings from Japan and Korea

My dear brothers and sisters, I am pleased to convey to all of you love and warm greetings from the wonderful Saints and missionaries of Japan and Korea. They join the hundreds of thousands of Saints and missionaries throughout the world in doing their utmost to be true and dedicated disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ so as to enjoy the blessings of peace and fulfillment in their lives and share the blessings of love and goodwill with others.

I am honored and humbled by this assignment from the First Presidency to speak in this session of general conference. If a wife's worries and concerns are the determining factor for assuring the success of a talk in general conference, then I'm happy to say I've got it made, for the amount of worries and concerns generated by my wife is more than enough to assure the success of not only my talk, but also all of the talks that have been given and will be given from this pulpit at this conference. What a blessing to have a wife who worries for you and over you.

“What think ye of Christ?”

In Matthew chapter 22, verse 42, is recorded a question of great import to you and me who profess to be disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ. The question, as raised by Jesus Himself, is “What think ye of Christ?” I'm sure we have thought of or have been asked this question before. No doubt we have come up with many responses, and all have been reflective of the deep love and esteem we have for Him. It is not surprising we have given or have heard others give, time and time again, such descriptions as the Only Begotten Son, Lord and Savior, Redeemer of the World, Sinless Sacrifice, Lamb of God, Light of the World, and countless more. And each time we bear testimony of what we think of Him, I'm sure we do it with utmost reverence and endearment. It is also reassuring to know that what we testify is made sure by the Spirit, for “no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost” (1 Corinthians 12:3).

“What doest ye for Christ?”

And now may I humbly pose another important question that may be considered a follow-up to “What think ye of Christ?” It is not a question found in the scriptures, but hopefully it may be worthy of your thoughtful consideration, and perhaps also prove appropriate in assessing and measuring our discipleship—yours and mine. As a follow-up to “What think ye of Christ?” may I pose the question “What doest ye for Christ?”

The main character relative to the question “What think ye of Christ?” is, of course, the Lord Jesus Himself. We place Him on center stage as we give vivid descriptions of His divine nature, mission, and accomplishments, followed by our thoughts and testimonies concerning His teachings and works during His ministry of three short years and the profound impact for good these have had in our lives.

The question “What doest ye for Christ?” is, of course, of great importance because it poses a challenge that has eternal implications and consequences affecting our mortal life and our life beyond the veil. This time we become the main characters, and we occupy center stage rather than Jesus Christ. The issue now is not what we think of Him, but rather what we have done, are doing, and will do for Him. Clearly our discipleship could and would be measured by our responses to this question, and obviously such responses must be in terms of works more than words.

Jesus taught us, “Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven” (Matthew 7:21). He brings home the powerful message that to do His Father’s will is the key to entering the kingdom of heaven. To think and to testify of Christ are very important, but in addition these must

be followed by good works patterned after those of Christ.

The answer to the question “What doest ye for Christ?” can be found only in the things we do for Him. The burden of proving our discipleship—in other words, what we are willing to do for Him—rests squarely on our shoulders. Truly by his works, Jesus has already proven the man He is and what He has accomplished for us. By what He did He has left us an indelible description of Himself and has made it easy for us to form an opinion about Him. Now the attention has shifted from Christ to us. It is our turn to leave a description of ourselves by what we do for Him, and this in turn provides the answers to the question “What doest ye for Christ?” and the question of what we want people to think of us.

A Christlike character

That description we eventually would like to leave of ourselves as we labor diligently to answer the question by the works we do may well be called character—hopefully even a Christlike character. The meaning and heart of a Christlike character are beautifully described in Jesus’ simple but profound statement, “What manner of men ought ye to be? . . . Even as I am” (3 Nephi 27:27). And typical of the great man He is, He not only tells us what a Christlike character is, He also extends a helping hand to you and me as to what we can and must do to have a Christlike character. In loving terms He said:

“Verily, verily I say unto you, this is my gospel; and ye know the things that ye must do in my church, for the works which ye have seen me do [even] that shall ye also do; for that which ye have seen me do even that shall ye do;

“Therefore, if ye do these things blessed are ye, for ye shall be lifted up at the last day” (3 Nephi 27:21–22).

Furthermore He said, "For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you" (John 13:15). And still further, "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed" (John 8:31). And finally, simply but majestically, "Follow thou me" (2 Nephi 31:10).

It becomes clear that the wisest and most sensible thing for us to do as His disciples is to labor diligently during this mortal estate to become like Him and acquire a Christlike character by following and doing what He taught and showed us. When we do this, our works become sure answers to the question "What doest ye for Christ?" and in turn they go hand in hand with our answers to "What think ye of Christ?" Indeed, our cries of "Lord, Lord" and the works we do being in harmony with each other for sure will entitle us to enter the kingdom of heaven.

The greatest of all achievements that we can attain in our long and chal-

lenging journey through immortality is when our claim to discipleship of the Lord Jesus Christ reaches the stage where we can say, with all honesty, His ways are our ways and His thoughts our thoughts.

That we may all achieve this through dedicated effort and steadfast faith in Him who is our Exemplar of truth and righteousness is my humble prayer in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Monson

We have just listened to Elders Stephen D. Naudal and Sam K. Shimabukuro of the Seventy. Brother Shimabukuro, we want Sister Shimabukuro to keep worrying about all of us. Her worries and her prayers surely were answered.

Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin of the Council of the Twelve Apostles will now speak to us.

Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin

My beloved brethren and sisters, it's a privilege for me to be here on this occasion and to have the opportunity of bearing my testimony as to the truthfulness of the gospel and my deep love of its leaders. I pray for the Spirit of the Lord while I address you.

Since being a very small boy, probably age five, I came to conference, and I remember I sat with my father on the third row, center section, and enjoyed so much all of the conferences that he took me to. But I don't believe I've ever attended a finer and more inspirational conference than this one. I might add, it's been probably the longest I've ever attended, since I'm one of the last speakers.

The inspired Wentworth letter

A key document of the restoration of the gospel is a letter the Prophet Joseph Smith wrote in reply to a request of John Wentworth, editor of a Chicago newspaper. In the Wentworth letter, the Prophet wrote a "sketch of the rise, progress, persecution, and faith of the Latter-day Saints" (*History of the Church*, 4:535). It apparently was the first published account of principal events that occurred in the thirty-six-year period after the Prophet's birth. The last part of the letter, the Articles of Faith, is a concise statement of fundamental beliefs of the Church. The fact that one heaven-inspired person rather than a council of scholars

produced this remarkable document is another evidence of Joseph Smith's divine calling (see *History of the Church*, 4:535 note).

Seeking the good

The last part of the thirteenth article of faith states, "If there is anything virtuous, lovely, or of good report or praiseworthy, we seek after these things."

The word *seek* means to go in search of, try to discover, try to acquire. It requires an active, assertive approach to life. For example, Abraham "sought for the blessings of the fathers . . . and to be a greater follower of righteousness" (Abraham 1:2). It is the opposite of passively waiting for something good to come to us with no effort on our part.

We can fill our lives with good, leaving no room for anything else. We have so much good from which to choose that we need never partake of evil. Elder Richard L. Evans declared: "There is evil in the world. There is also good. It is for us to learn and choose between the two; to increase in self-discipline, in competence, in kindness; to keep going—putting one foot in front of the other—one day, one hour, one moment, one task at a time" (*Thoughts for One Hundred Days*, 5 vols. [Salt Lake City: Publishers Press, 1966–72], 4:199).

If we seek things that are virtuous and lovely, we surely will find them. Conversely, if we seek for evil, we will find that also. Lucifer understands how to tempt and drag many of our Heavenly Father's children down to where he and his followers are. He rebelled and was cast out; he wants to make us as miserable as he is (see 2 Nephi 2:18).

My message may be the opposite of the worldly message of Satan's fallacy. Nephi described it when he wrote:

"Many . . . shall say: Eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we die; and it shall be well with us.

" . . . Nevertheless, fear God—he will justify in committing a little sin; yea, lie a little, take the advantage of one . . . ; there is no harm in this; and do all these things, for tomorrow we die; and if it so be that we are guilty, God will beat us with a few stripes, and at last we shall be saved in the kingdom of God" (2 Nephi 28:7–8).

Though we live in the world, we must not be of the world. For members of the Church, seeking the good is more than a lofty ideal. It is an obligation we accepted when we entered the waters of baptism; we renew it each time we partake of the sacrament. We must remember, "The Lord cannot look upon sin with the least degree of allowance; nevertheless, he that repents and does the commandments of the Lord shall be forgiven" (D&C 1:31–32).

Strengthening our families

We can seek to strengthen our families and can foster peace and happiness in our homes, making them a safe haven from the cares and woes about us. By example parents can teach children to be kind, considerate, respectful, and supportive of one another and to avoid strife and contention. Occasionally, family members treat each other with less courtesy and kindness than they do acquaintances or even strangers. Family members do have differences that can cause friction, but they should reserve their most tender affection for those who are closest to them: their spouse, parents, brothers, and sisters. The true greatness of a person, in my view, is evident in the way he or she treats those with whom courtesy and kindness are not required.

Being good neighbors

We can seek to be good neighbors. In most cases, those who are good neighbors will have good neighbors. Being a good neighbor means doing more than offering a thoughtful gesture from time to time on a holiday or in a crisis. It means striving continuously to build and maintain genuine friendship. We react quickly in an emergency. For example, last Christmas our neighbor's car caught on fire. Everyone who saw the flames immediately rushed out to help. Do we respond as well when the need is less urgent but perhaps very important? Do we visit our neighbors even when no one is ill and no crisis exists?

Providing selfless service

We can seek to provide selfless service because of the love we have for our fellowmen. The Savior placed such love second only to love for God when he said:

"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.

"This is the first and great commandment.

"And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

"On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets" (Matthew 22:37-40).

Regarding these two commandments, we read in the book of 1 John:

"If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?

"And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also" (1 John 4:20-21).

Serving others should become a natural part of the life of every follower of our Savior. When we subordinate

personal interests out of love and give of ourselves with no thought of receiving in return, we are moving toward becoming true disciples.

"The Lord has . . . commanded his people to care for the poor and needy. He said, 'And remember in all things the poor and the needy, the sick and the afflicted, for he that doeth not these things, the same is not my disciple' (D&C 52:40)" (*Providing in the Lord's Way: A Leader's Guide to Welfare* [1990], p. 3). In a stake I visited recently, the unemployment rate was high. However, the faithful Saints and leaders there have joined together in a liberal fast-offering contribution to make sure that no one goes without necessities.

Becoming self-reliant

We should seek to become self-reliant, so far as possible, rather than depend on someone else to provide for us. Some people seem to have the notion that we have a right to everything in life without making any effort to produce it ourselves. Many believe the government and others should take care of us. They think others should provide food, health care, and housing. Of course, society must care for some of its people, but the general population should get away from the idea of depending on the government for things they can provide for themselves and their families.

Being happy

We should seek to be happy and cheerful and not allow Satan to overcome us with discouragement, despair, or depression. As President Benson said, "Of all people, we as Latter-day Saints should be the most optimistic and the least pessimistic" ("Do Not Despair," *Ensign*, Oct. 1986, p. 2). Where sin is the cause of unhappiness, we need to repent and return to a righteous

life because "wickedness never was happiness" (Alma 41:10). "You cannot do wrong and feel right. It is impossible" (Ezra Taft Benson, "To 'The Rising Generation,'" *New Era*, June 1986, p. 5).

I believe happiness comes from a clear conscience and from being without guile or deception. It means avoiding jealousy and envy. It means cultivating peace in our homes and enjoying the peace in our hearts that righteousness brings. It comes from a knowledge and assurance, given by the Spirit, that the life we are pursuing accords with God's will and is acceptable to him (see Joseph Smith, *Lectures on Faith*, 3:5). After all, the Prophet Joseph's oft-quoted statement remains in force; he said, "Happiness is the object and design of our existence; and will be the end thereof, if we pursue the path that leads to it; and this path is virtue, uprightness, faithfulness, holiness, and keeping all the commandments of God" (*History of the Church*, 5:134-35). We need not feel depressed or discouraged about conditions in the world, for the Lord will help us find the good that will lead us to happiness.

Seeking uplifting entertainment

In a day when broadcasters and publishers have rather free access into our homes, we must seek clean, uplifting entertainment, whether on television, videos, movies, magazines, books, or other printed material. We should be very selective and choose only those things that meet the test of being virtuous, lovely, of good report, or praiseworthy. If it is questionable, we should avoid it.

Supporting good government

Especially in an election year, as we have in the United States this year, we should seek to support those we believe will act with integrity and carry

out our ideas of good government. The Lord has said:

"When the wicked rule the people mourn. Wherefore, honest men and wise men should be sought for diligently, and good men and wise men ye should observe to uphold" (D&C 98:9-10).

The Church maintains a policy of strict political neutrality, favoring no party or candidate, but every member should take an active part in the political process. We should study the issues and the candidates to be sure our votes are based on knowledge rather than hearsay. We need to pray for our public officials and ask the Lord to help them in making momentous decisions that affect us. Our beliefs regarding earthly governments and laws are summarized in section 134 of the Doctrine and Covenants and the twelfth article of faith. We should support public policy that coincides with these moral beliefs.

Sharing the gospel

Church members should seek to carry the gospel message forth to all who will hear it. We should seek without delay to preach by precept and by example to be sure everyone is willing to accept gospel truths and has the opportunity to do so. The best way to teach the gospel is to live it. Parents are to prepare their children by teaching them gospel principles; teaching them to live clean, pure lives so they can be worthy missionaries and ambassadors of the Lord; encouraging them to acquire a strong testimony of the gospel; and helping them to prepare financially for this sacred service. Also, older couples should arrange their affairs so they can serve as missionaries.

Doing temple work

We can seek to enter holy temples frequently to perform essential ordinances regularly for others who have

preceded us. Temple work enables us to do for others what they cannot do for themselves. It is a labor of love that permits our forefathers to continue their progress toward eternal life. As valuable and beneficial as temple work is to them, it is equally valuable to us. The house of the Lord is a place where we can escape from the mundane and see our lives in an eternal perspective. We can ponder instructions and covenants that help us understand more clearly the plan of salvation and the infinite love of our Heavenly Father for his children. We can ponder our relationship to God, the Eternal Father, and his Son, Jesus Christ.

We learn from the Doctrine and Covenants that a temple is a place of thanksgiving, "a place of instruction for all those who are called to the work of the ministry in all their several callings and offices; that they may be perfected in the understanding of their ministry, in theory, in principle, and in doctrine, in all things pertaining to the kingdom of God on the earth" (D&C 97:13-14).

Regular temple work can provide spiritual strength. It can be an anchor in daily life, a source of guidance, protection, security, peace, and revelation. No work is more spiritual than temple work.

In the words of Hugh Nibley: The "temple is a scale model of the universe. . . . The mystique of the temple lies in its extension to other worlds; it is the reflection on earth of the heavenly order, and the power that fills it comes from above" (*Temple and Cosmos: Beyond This Ignorant Present* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1992], p. xv).

As spirit children of our Heavenly Father, we should seek always to recognize the divine potential within us and never restrict our perspective to the limited scope of mortal life.

Seeking the Holy Ghost

We should seek the Holy Ghost, who can be the constant companion of all members of the Church who are obedient and righteous. He can reveal all truth to us in our minds and in our hearts, comfort us in times of distress, prompt us in making correct choices and decisions, and help us purify ourselves from sin. I know of no greater blessing that can come to us in mortality than the companionship of the Holy Ghost.

Surely we live in troubled times, but we can seek and obtain the good despite Satan's temptations and snares. He cannot tempt us beyond our power to resist (see 1 Corinthians 10:13). When we seek "anything virtuous, lovely, or of good report or praiseworthy," we are seeking to emulate the Savior and follow his teachings. Then we are on the path that can lead us to eternal life.

I bear humble witness that our Heavenly Father knows and loves each of his children and that his Beloved Son, Jesus Christ, is our Savior and Redeemer. Joseph Smith is the prophet of the restoration of the gospel of Jesus Christ. His successors, from Brigham Young to our present prophet, President Ezra Taft Benson, are also modern-day prophets of God. They teach us to seek that which is good. I so testify in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Monson

Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin of the Council of the Twelve has just spoken to us.

Before hearing the closing remarks of President Gordon B. Hinckley, First Counselor in the First Presidency, we express appreciation to the Mormon Youth Chorus, the Relief Society choir from the Brigham City Utah Region, the Aaronic Priesthood choir from the Orem Utah Region, and the

Tabernacle Choir and to their conductors and organists for the beautiful and inspiring music during all of the sessions of conference.

We thank our city officials for the cooperation given this conference; the doctor, the Church Health Unit nurses, and the ambulance services who have been on hand to render assistance; the ushers and the interpreters; and those who are responsible for the beautiful flowers on the stand and on Temple Square. Temple Square is literally a garden paradise.

We express appreciation to local and national press representatives for the coverage of the conference.

We are grateful for the owners and the operators of the many radio and television stations and cable and satellite systems who have given time and made facilities available to carry sessions of this conference in many countries.

Following President Hinckley's remarks, the Tabernacle Choir will sing "Consider the Lilies of the Field."

The benediction will be offered by Bishop Henry B. Eyring, First Counselor in the Presiding Bishopric.

The conference will then stand adjourned for six months.

President Gordon B. Hinckley

My beloved brothers and sisters, these have been two wonderful days. I hope that we will review and ponder what we have heard. We have feasted on the word of God.

The music has been wonderful. The prayers have been inspired. The talks have been uplifting and enlightening, and our lives will be the richer for our experience if we strive to do better in harmony with the teachings to which we have listened.

President Benson's testimony

We regret that President Benson has been unable to speak to us. He is now in his ninety-third year. His presence yesterday and again today has helped us. We have enjoyed his smile and the wave of his hand. As we bring this meeting to a close, I leave with you a statement from him—his personal witness of the Son of God, whose servant he is. These are his words:

"Nearly two thousand years ago a perfect Man walked the earth—Jesus the Christ. He was the Son of a Heavenly Father and an earthly mother. He

is the God of this world, under the Father. In his life, all the virtues were lived and kept in perfect balance; he taught men truth—that they might be free; his example and precepts provide the great standard—the only sure way—for all mankind. Among us he became the first and only one who had the power to reunite his body with his spirit after death. By his power all men who have died shall be resurrected. Before him one day we all must stand to be judged by his laws. He lives today, and in the not too distant future shall return, in triumph, to subdue his enemies, to reward men according to their deeds, and to assume his [rightful] role to rule and reign in righteousness over the entire earth" (*An Enemy Hath Done This*, comp. Jerreld L. Newquist [Salt Lake City: Parliament Publishers, 1969], pp. 52–53).

Such is the testimony of our prophet and our leader. When all is said and done, I remind you that this is our great mission—to bear witness to the world, both with example and precept, of the living reality of the Son of God, the resurrected Lord, who is our Redeemer and our Savior.

"I invoke the blessings of heaven"

Now in conclusion, may I thank each of you, all within the sound of my voice, wherever you may be across this broad land and across the world, for the faith which you carry in your hearts of the divinity of this work, for the devotion with which you serve, for your prayerful desires to bring up your children in light and truth and to nurture them with the good word of God.

When you leave the Tabernacle in a few minutes, I invite you to look at the spires of the temple just to the east of us. The capstone on the highest tower of that beautiful structure was put in place one hundred years ago tomorrow. The Brethren at the conference of a century ago urged the people to consecrate the needed skills and resources to ensure dedication of the temple on April 6, 1893. They met the challenge, and at this time next year we will commemorate the centennial of

the dedication of this magnificent house of the Lord. Its presence is testimony that no challenge is too great for the people of this Church when they move forward in faith.

In behalf of President Benson and all of my Brethren, I invoke upon you, wherever you may be, the blessings of heaven. May the Lord smile with favor upon you that there may be peace in your lives and peace in your homes. May you return safely to those you love, and may the remembrances of this great occasion be sweet and fruitful, I humbly pray. God be with you till we meet again, my beloved brethren and sisters, my friends and associates in this great work, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The choir sang "Consider the Lilies of the Field."

Bishop Henry B. Eyring offered the benediction.

SUMMARY OF CONFERENCE MUSIC

The Mormon Youth Chorus, conducted by Robert C. Bowden, sang at the Saturday morning session of the conference. Bonnie Goodliffe and Linda Margetts were the organists.

Music for the Saturday afternoon session was provided by a Relief Society choir from the Brigham City Utah Region, conducted by Evelyn M. Harris. Clay Christiansen was the organist.

At the general priesthood session, music was provided by an Aaronic Priesthood choir from the Orem Utah Region. Stanley Zenk conducted the choir, and John Longhurst was the organist.

The Tabernacle Choir, conducted by Jerold Ottley and Donald Ripplinger, provided music for the Sunday morning and afternoon sessions. Richard Elliott and John Longhurst were the organists.

Throughout the conference sessions, prelude, postlude, and interlude music and accompaniments on the Tabernacle organ were played by John Longhurst, Clay Christiansen, and Richard Elliott, Tabernacle organists; and by Bonnie Goodliffe and Linda Margetts, Temple Square organists.

F. Michael Watson
Clerk of the conference

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